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THE LIFE OF
ROBERT NELSON.





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MEMOIRS
OF THE
LIFE AND TIMES
OF THE PIOUS
ROBERT NELSON.







I frequently attend the affairs
of our Society it is in order
to do all the little good I can

^r Humble Servant
Rob: Nelson

MEMOIRS
OF THE
LIFE AND TIMES
OF THE PIOUS
ROBERT NELSON,

AUTHOR OF THE "COMPANION TO THE FESTIVALS
AND FASTS OF THE CHURCH."

BY REV. C. F. SECRETAN, M.A.,
INCUMBENT OF HOLY TRINITY, WESTMINSTER.

With Portrait.

LONDON:
JOHN MURRAY, ALBEMARLE STREET.

1860.

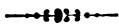
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PREFACE.



THE present is the first attempt at an extended biography of the "pious" Robert Nelson, (as he was commonly styled by his contemporaries,) since his decease in 1714. A memoir, as is well known, was promised to the public * immediately after his death ; his friend Dr. Francis Lee † having undertaken the task, going over his papers for that purpose with one of his executors, and being intrusted, it would seem, with a collection of letters written to him by different eminent persons. Lee, however, died rather suddenly, August 23, 1719, at Gravelines, whither he had gone on business, having published no further account of Nelson than what occurs in his "Life of Kettlewell." And the only contemporary memoir that appeared was a slight sketch of Nelson's Life and Writings, published by Curll, ‡

* The Postboy of Feb. 15, 1714, containing an announcement of Nelson's "Address to Persons of Quality," adds "And for preventing any injury that may be done to the memory of so great a man, or to the publick, by any unfaithful, imperfect, and surreptitious accounts, the history of his life is undertaken by a friend sufficiently instructed and furnished with materials for the same."

† Thoresby's "Correspondence," vol. iv., p. 300. "Dr. Lea, a physician, is preparing materials for Mr. Nelson's Life; he has published Mr. Nelson's 'Address to Persons of Quality' upon the subject of religion."

‡ My only knowledge of this is from the accompanying advertisement, the first of the two vols. (1715) being all I have seen:—

"The Works of the late Pious and Learned Robert Nelson, Esq.,

in an epitomised edition of his works. The notices supplied by Nicholls, in his "Anecdotes of Bowyer," and in his "Literary Anecdotes and Illustrations;" a careful sketch of Nelson's life in the "Biographia Britannica;" a very flight memoir prefixed to an edition of his "Christian Sacrifice" in 1841, by the Rev. W. B. Hawkins; and a Life of Robert Nelson, in Mr. Teale's "Lives of English Laymen" (1844), form the only attempts which have since been made to preserve the memory of this devout, learned, laborious, and munificent member of our Church.

In addition to the above sources of information, the following materials have been employed in the present work:—

Four letters from Nelson to John Johnson, of Cranbrook; printed by Brett, in 1748.

Fifteen letters from Nelson to Dr. Mapletoft, preserved in the "European Magazine," vols. xv., xvi.

Sixteen letters from Nelson to Dr. Charlett, from the Ballard MSS. in the Bodleian; four of which have been previously published by Aubrey.

Thirty-six letters and short notes from Nelson to Wanley, from the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum; in great part printed by Mr. Teale.

containing the following Treatises:—I. The Whole Duty of a Christian. II. The Practice of true Devotion, in relation to the End, as well as the Means of Religion. III. A Letter to a Roman Priest concerning the pretended miracles and infallibility of their Church. IV. The great Duty of frequenting the Christian Sacrifice, and the Nature of the Preparation required, with suitable Devotions. V. The Life and Character of Bishop Bull. VI. An Address to Persons of Quality and Estate, concerning the different methods of doing good. VII. A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England. VIII. Some Account of Mr. Nelson's Life and Writings; with a true copy of his Last Will and Testament. Also his Character, by Dr. Marshall. The whole compendiously methodised for the use of families. Two volumes. Price 6s."

One letter from Nelson to Archbishop Sharp, from the Miscellaneous Papers of Dr. Birch, in the British Museum.

Two letters from Nelson to Hilkiah Bedford, from the Rawlinson MSS. in the Bodleian.

Lord Melfort's Correspondence with Nelson, from the Lansdowne MSS. in the British Museum.

I have also to express my acknowledgments and thanks

To J. H. Markland, Esq., D.C.L., for the communication of two letters from Nelson to the first Schoolmaster of the Blue-coat School, Bath, and for other proofs of kindly interest in the present work ;

To the Right Honourable Lord Malmesbury, for access to the letters of the Levant Company, in the Library of the Foreign Office, which have supplied several particulars respecting Nelson's family ;

To the Rev. T. B. Murray and the Rev. E. Hawkins, for ready access to the Journals of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel, of both of which Nelson was an early and zealous member ;

To the Rev. J. B. Deane, Rector of St. Martin's, Outwich ;

To the Rev. Robert Gibson, Rector of St. Mary Abchurch, and St. Laurence Pountney ;

To the Rev. Thos. Maurice, Vicar of Driffield, in the county of Gloucester ;

To the Rev. H. W. Hickes, Rector of Cranford, Middlesex ; and

To the Rev. John Back, Rector of St. George the Martyr, Queen Square, for obliging transcripts

from, or for ready access to, the registers of their respective parishes.

From these and other sources it is hoped that a biography of Robert Nelson has now been produced, sufficiently extended to do justice to the memory and example of one whose name is a household word with thousands among us who yet know nothing more of him than the name; but whose orthodox teaching and charitable labours and sober piety, in a latitudinarian age, and amid all the bitterness of religious partisanship, are admirably calculated to supply a pattern and encouragement to ourselves, amid similar trials at the present day.

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THE Pious Robert Nelson was born June 22nd, and baptized July 8th, 1656, at a time when the church of which he was designed to prove so bright an ornament and so able a member was lying helpless and in disgrace under the iron hand of Cromwell. When our Zion was at her lowest, God was raising up a restorer of her desolate places; and in the competence which Robert Nelson inherited from his infancy, in the still richer inheritance of his parents' piety, and in the singular excellence of disposition with which he was gifted, we may discern traces of that Providence which was preparing him to become the promoter of true religion, and an example of charity and goodness.

He was the son of Mr. John Nelson, a wealthy Turkey merchant of the city of London, by Delicia, the daughter of Captain Lewis Roberts, also an eminent trader to the Levant.

Mr. John Nelson seems to have sprung from a family of humble condition in Suffolk, and to have acquired a considerable fortune during a residence at Aleppo. We find him a leading merchant there, and acting as treasurer of the Levant Company in their factory on the spot, in 1645. In 1651 he had settled in London, and in his place at the Board of the Levant Company was interesting himself to send out as chaplain to his friends at Aleppo, Mr. Robert Frampton, better known in after years as the nonjuring bishop of Gloucester.* And this prepares us for the distaste he expresses in his will for the intruding ministry of the time, and for his request to be "privately buried by an orthodox minister in the evening."† His residence was in Suffolk Lane, and he was interred accordingly (Sept. 14, 1657)

* The future biographer of Bishop Frampton may be glad of an extract from the Letters of the Levant Company respecting him:—"1655, Sept. 17. To Consul at Aleppo—As for a Minister, we have now at last (after much trouble and solicitude herein) fixed upon a person in whom we are confident you will think yourselves well satisfied, one Mr. Frampton, who, as he came recommended to us with extraordinary characters of worth from others, so himself hath since given us very sufficient testimony of his merits, in respect whereof we have advanced his salary to dollars 400 per annum." "Nov. 18. To the same.—Who being to take his passage upon the Golden Fleece, now ready to depart, we are willing to accompany him with this our second recommendation, and can do no less than make this addition to the character you have already received, that the more experience we have had of him, the better we are satisfied with our choice, and are the more confident of your contentment and happiness under his ministry. He brings thither with him the several books mentioned in the enclosed list, which (upon notice of your great want) have been provided by the company's order, and at their charge, and are to remain there for the use of him and of succeeding ministers."—Signed by John Nelson and others.

† So of Sir Thomas Abdy, we are told "He was buried at 10 of the clock at night, it being the hour he usually went to bed, and he appointing by his will that his executors should put him into his grave at the time that mortals go to their rest." *Autobiography of Sir John Brampton*, p. 220.



in the parish church of St. Laurence Pountney, where he had already buried his eldest child John.*

His wife Delicia—*Delitiæ*, her more scholarly son preferred to spell it—was the daughter of Captain Lewis Roberts, who had come to London from Beaumaris in Anglesea, and was for many years an active member of the Levant Company, as well as the author of several works on trade.† He was buried March 12, 1640, in a vault which he had purchased beneath the church of St. Martin's Outwich, Bishopsgate, where his daughter, Delicia Nelson, with other members of his family, was afterwards laid. She had herself requested in her will to be buried

“Either in St. Laurence Pountney churchyard, in which church before it was burnt down, lay interred the body of my dear husband and my eldest son John, or in St. Martin's Outwich, where my dear mother lies interred.”

In another clause, she bequeaths to Ann Lordell, her niece “my Testament which was my mother's, which I usually read in.” And slender as these materials are, they are yet sufficient to indicate the character of Robert Nelson's mother, and enable us to judge of the piety and affection with which she trained the childhood of her “dear and loving son,” as she calls him.

Of the three children of this marriage, John, Robert,

* Extracts from the Register of St. Laurence Pountney :—

“Christenings. Robert, the sonne of John Nelson, merchant, and Delicia, his wife, July 8th, 1656.

Gabriell, the sonne of John Nelson, merchant, and Delicia, his wife, borne the 17th of July, and baptized the 29th, 1657.”

“Burials. July the 26th, 1656. John, the sonne of John Nelson, marchant, and Delicia, his wife.

Sept. the 14th, 1657. Mr. John Nelson, marchant.”

† “The Merchant's Map of Commerce,” 1638. A Poetical Testimony is prefixed by Isaac Walton. This work, a large folio, reached a 4th edition in 1700.

“Warfare Epitomized.” 1640.

“The Treasure of Traffic. Dedicated to the High Court of Parliament now assembled.” 1641.

A Poem by Lewis Roberts is also prefixed to Fletcher's “Purple Island,” 1633.

and Gabriel, Robert was the only one who survived his infancy, and, being but two years old at his father's death, was brought up under the joint guardianship of his mother, and her brother, Mr. Gabriel Roberts, afterwards knighted. Of his boyhood we have no further account, than that he was a most beautiful child, that he shewed a strength and vivacity of understanding beyond his years, and for the sweetness of his disposition was exceedingly beloved by everyone. Sir Gabriel Roberts, who had no son of his own, was extremely fond of him, and uncle and nephew seem always to have retained the warmest attachment for each other. He received his earliest education at St. Paul's School, in the city of London, where he contracted a school-boy friendship with Edmund Halley the mathematician, who, nearly fifty years after, could affectionately acknowledge "the uninterrupted course of friendship, which has always subsisted between us ever since our childhood."* From St. Paul's School, however, he was soon removed by the affection of his mother to the village of Dryfield, near Cirencester, where she took up her abode with her sister Ann, the wife of George Hanger, Esq., formerly a Levant merchant at Smyrna, and an intimate of Nelson's father in London, but now settled on his paternal estate of Dryfield, or Driffild, in Gloucestershire.

Robert Nelson's removal to Dryfield forms a providential æra in his life. Dr. George Bull, the learned author of the "*Defensio Fidei Nicenæ*" so highly praised by Bossuet, afterwards bishop of St. David's, was then rector of the neighbouring parish of St. Peter with St. Mary Siddington, and to this able and orthodox instructor Mrs. Nelson now committed the education of her son. To Bishop Bull's instructions Robert Nelson owed whatever learning he

* A letter to Robert Nelson, Esq., at the end of Brokesby's "*Life of Dodwell*," Lond. 1715. 8vo.

possessed; for though his name* was afterwards entered at Trinity College, Cambridge, he seems never to have gone into residence or to have prosecuted his studies at the University. To the influence of Bull's teaching we must likewise ascribe the respect for primitive antiquity and for church authority which distinguishes Nelson's writings. In the family of his uncle, in London, he might have contracted a very different theological bias: Sir Gabriel's daughters married into dissenting families;† Tillotson, who was now preaching before crowded city congregations at St. Lawrence Jewry, was his favourite divine; and Dr. Kidder, the latitudinarian successor of Bishop Ken, was rector of his parish church of St. Martin's Outwich. Tillotson had early taken notice of Nelson; the goodness of heart which distinguished each of them would naturally generate a mutual esteem, and in spite of their disparity of years, they soon contracted a friendship of unusual warmth. And that, notwithstanding such personal attachment to the great preacher of latitudinarian religion, Nelson should have formed theological opinions of so opposite a complexion, can only be attributed to the influence of Bishop Bull, to whom (among many other obligations) the Church of England owes it that his young pupil grew up a Robert Nelson instead of merely a Robert Boyle, an earnest and attached churchman, as well as a pious and charitable Christian. To his early tutor's memory Nelson has left a worthy tribute in his "Life and History of those Controversies in which he

* His name appears at the end of the list of Pensioners, and at the head of the Fellow Commoners admitted in 1678. Coles MSS. Brit. Mus. vol. xiv. p. 330.

† Dorcas Roberts married Sir John Fryer, who was Lord Mayor in 1721, and to whom she bore twins that same year, Gabriel and Delicia, who were baptized by a dissenting minister. Delicia Roberts, named after Nelson's mother, was married first to Philip Wolff, Esq., secondly to Alderman Deacle, M.P. for Evesham, thirdly to Rev. Obadiah Hughes, D.D., an eminent dissenting preacher.

was engaged ;” a work which he undertook at the request of the bishop’s son, and which (he could not but confess) no one was better qualified to execute.

“ For I had maintained,” he writes, “ a long and intimate friendship with his lordship, which gave me an opportunity of being acquainted with his solid and substantial worth ; I had frequently sat at his feet as he was a preacher, and as often felt the force of those distinguishing talents which enabled him to shine in the pulpit ; but, above all, I had preserved a grateful remembrance of those advantages which I had received from him in my education, part of which was committed to his care and direction.”

Nelson was still residing with his mother at Dryfield, in 1678, at the close of which year we find their names recorded in the parish register* as contributors to the brief for rebuilding St. Paul’s Cathedral ; and an equally characteristic memento of his connection with the place is to be found in a service of communion plate, still in ordinary use at the church, consisting of a paten, flagon, and chalice, each of which bears the inscription—

“ The gift of Robert Nelson, Esq., who departed this life the 16th of January, 1714. Declared in his last will and testament to be for y^e use of y^e Church of Dryfield, in y^e county of Gloucester.”

The Hangers of Driffeld became extinct in the year 1824 ; their mansion had been previously demolished, the timber cut down and sold, and the estate dissipated by the two last heads of the family, William and George Hanger, Lords Coleraine, and the only interest now attaching to the

* Extract from Register of Driffeld. “ Contributions at Driffeld, given to the Briefe for y^e repairs of St. Paul’s Church in London, Octob. 13, 1678 :

Geo. Hanger, Esq ^r , a Gynny	. . .	1 <i>l</i> . 1 <i>s</i> . 6 <i>d</i> .
Mrs. Anne Hanger, his wife	. . .	ol. 10 <i>s</i> . 0 <i>d</i> .
Mrs. Delicia Nelson, widow, of	. . .	
Lond ^a , a Gynny	. . .	1 <i>l</i> . 1 <i>s</i> . 6 <i>d</i> .
Mr. Rob. Nelson, a Londoner,	. . .	
her son, a Gynny	. . .	1 <i>l</i> . 1 <i>s</i> . 6 <i>d</i> .”
(and seven others.)		

secluded village is owing to the memorials that it contains of Robert Nelson's youth.

The attainments which he here acquired under Bull's tuition, and the character which was now beginning to form in him, are exhibited in two letters, which about this time he took occasion to address to another early friend, Dr. Mapletoft, upon the news of his marriage. Dr. Mapletoft was an eminent physician of the day, professor of physic at Gresham College, and the intimate acquaintance of Sydenham, whose works he edited. To Robert Nelson he would be attracted, not so much by any similarity of scientific pursuits, as by that kindly esteem which a good man would feel towards a pure and pious youth. His own earnestness in religion (owing, doubtless, in part, to his early education in the family of his great uncle and godfather, Nicholas Farrar, at Gidding,) induced him, a few years later, to retire from the practice of physic, and to seek the holy orders of the church. He obtained the living of St. Lawrence Jewry, in 1685, and devoted himself most assiduously to the duties of his parish, providing every household with a collection of suitable books of devotion, in his list of which appears Nelson's "Exhortation to Housekeepers to set up the worship of God in their Families." He took a leading part in the early deliberations of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, in the promotion of Dr. Bray's designs, and in the other charitable endeavours of the time. With Robert Nelson—who seems never to have lost a friend he once possessed—he always maintained a close and frequent correspondence; and the two letters to him which follow have an especial interest, as the earliest productions of his young friend's pen, although the stiff and laboured congratulations which they contain form but a poor introduction to the natural expressions and plain good sense of Nelson's later letters.

London, the 12 Dec. 1679.*

“DEAR and HONOURED SIR,—As soon as I came to town, which was about ten days ago, I made a strict inquiry concerning your welfare, which I counted myself not a little concerned in, by reason your many favours and obligations, besides the just value of your person, have engaged me to a particular respect and esteem for yourself, so that my own happiness will be much increased by any addition to your satisfaction. I was soon informed of the alteration of your condition, and that you had made the grand experiment of human life, which seldom admits of any mean, but carries us to the utmost boundaries of happiness or misery; and being well satisfied that your great prudence would secure the former of the two extremes—for *nullum numen abest, si sit prudentia*—I thought it no ways disagreeable to congratulate your present enjoyment. Nay friendship and affection obliged me to express my just resentment, and be assured that the news of your great felicity under your present circumstances finds a welcome reception from no one more than from myself, the only reason that forbids my regret for your absence here in town. I heartily wish those ideas and notions you framed of matrimony may be exceeded in the possession, that propriety and enjoyment may whetten the edge of your affections, and that no part of your happiness may leave you now it ceases to be imaginary. And though Thales, who was a wise man, would seem to insinuate as if marriage was never convenient for the wise; yet, as Alex. ab Alex. observes well, ‘*licet hæc ambage verborum sapienti nunquam uxorem ducendam demonstraret, veruntamen qui hæc propenso judicio explorare vult, profecto in conjugiiis multa inveniet commoda usui vitæ necessaria, sine quibus vix homini sapienti cælibem vitam ducere expediat*,’ &c. Nay all nations have honoured those that are married, and punished Celibacy. Even the Utopians, that seemed to have the most refined and abstracted notions of things, would have those that lived single punished, as useless in a commonwealth. The creation of the world

* *European Magazine*, Vol. xv., pp. 11, 12.

would be to little purpose without it, for *humano generi immortalitatem tribuit*; and therefore *indignè vivit per quem non vivit et alter*: nay it is the opinion of some, that it is impossible to be saved without it.—It would be endless to prosecute all the arguments, and enumerate all the authorities in its behalf; though I am sensible there has a great deal been said on the other side. However, if it consisted with my interest and conveniency, and the object gratified my inclinations, it is not the rant and satire of a Poet, or the declamation of an Orator, that should prevail so far as to make me suspend the execution of that, for which my motives were so specious and plausible. But for all my zeal I am still *mei juris* free as ever, and have yet no prospect of being otherwaies; and shall alwayes pray that all the advantages of your condition may center in your match; that you may be long happy in the embraces of an excellent wife, blessed with a prosperous offspring, which may inherit your virtues as well as estate, and then all other inconveniences may be well dispensed with. As to news, what we now most talk of, is the prorogation of the Parliament till the 11th of Nov. with a proviso that the King may call them sooner if he pleases. It is their petitioning has enraged him, and he swears by God they may knock out his brains, but shall never cut off his head. For all this, they say they will still go on in getting subscriptions: the consequence I am afraid may be bad. I cannot enlarge because Mrs. Firmin sends for my letter, and says, it will be too late, if it does not go presently. My humble service to your Lady, Mr. Dent, and my Lady Brograve and all the good company, and be assured that I am

“Your obliged humble servant,

“ROBERT NELSON.

“All your devout friends are much your servants.

“My mother presents her humble service to you and your Lady.

“To my worthy friend the much honoured Dr. Mapletost, att Hamwelly, in Hartfordshire.”

London, 2d January, 1679.

“WORTHY SIR,—I am very sensible that the true ground and reason of most of the disappointments many men meet with in the grand transactions of their lives, proceeds not so much from the nature of things themselves, as from those extravagant conceptions they form of them; and that the chiefest ingredient of their unhappiness is the false opinion they have entertained of sublunary enjoyments, whereby their expectations are raised to so high a pitch, that as 'tis not in the capacity of things to gratify, so they were never designed for that purpose; which gave occasion to that noble saying of Epictetus, *homines perturbantur non rebus, sed ijs quas de rebus habent opinionibus*; and to that of Seneca to the same sense, *sepius opinione quàm re laboramus*. Now, a wise man, that takes a true estimate of all those things which make the greatest figure in the world, will never promise himself complete satisfaction, because they are not the adequate objects of his desires. He knows that the best state of things here has a great mixture, and he is the happy man whose condition admits of the least inconvenience, a total exemption being no wise the privilege of human nature. And hereupon I could lay a sure foundation for your happiness, since those notions I have observed you to entertain, will never tend to diminish it. Besides, your present circumstances must greatly enhance it; for according to the Italians (for whose acquaintance I must always acknowledge myself debtor to yourself) *senza moglie al lato, l'huomo non è beato*.^{*} Sir, I was lately to wait upon Madam Houblon, who made strict enquiries after you. Your letter enabled me to give her full satisfaction in all points; tho', she says, she reckons you so discreet a person, that now you are married, you'll never complain of any inconveniencies, but make the best of a bad market. However, I look upon this as measuring other people's corn by our own bushell, imagining our sentiments must be the rule for others to steer by; notwithstanding, I was so far obliged as to be esteemed among your friends and acquaintance,

^{*} Dr. Mapletost published (in 1707) a collection of “Select Proverbs, Italian, Spanish, French, English, Scotch, &c., chiefly moral.”

which is no small addition to my own character. According to the company men keep in town, you well know we have our apprehensions of public affairs. In some places we are told, the petition for the parliament's setting goes on, and that 'tis countenanced by men of credit and reputation: in another place, you shall hear it exposed, and confidently affirmed, that none but the rascality and fanaticks are engaged in it. I heard from pretty good hands yesterday, that the parliament would be dissolved before the 26th January; 'tis hoped, in order to call a new one. We expect the Duke of York here in ten days: the design of his sudden return is not known. We talk mightily of a letter the Prince of Orange has sent to the King; some say, to persuade him to a strict alliance with Holland; others, to forewarn him of the designs of the Monsieur against him, who has, 'tis said, drawn down many of his men to Dunkirk and Calice; but I think every spring of late years has afforded us discourse of a French invasion. Your friend and schoolfellow, Mr. Dryden, has been severely beaten, for being the supposed author of a late very abusive lampoon. There has been a good sum of money offered to find who set them on work: 'tis said, they received their orders from the Duchefs of Portsmouth, who is concerned in the lampoone. My humble service pray to your lady, who I am glad to hear thrives so bravely, as to give hopes of an *hans en kelder**; the like to the rest of the good company; and be assured that I am

“ Your obliged humble servant,

“ ROBERT NELSON.

“ My mother's service attends you and your lady.

“ To the worthy Dr. Mapletoft, att
Hamels, in Hartfordshire.”

Nelson's acquaintance with Dr. Mapletoft may have introduced him to the distinguished men of science, who, as members of the Royal Society, now held their weekly meetings at Gresham College, in the city, and who elected

* Literally, Jack in the cellar; a humorous expression of the day for *infans in utero*.

him into their body on April 1, 1680.* That, at the age of twenty-four years, he should have sought admission into the Royal Society, would imply an early interest in natural science which he hardly seems to have retained in after life, when the more congenial labours of the religious societies of the day engaged all his sympathy and leisure. The Minutes of the Royal Society do not exhibit him as a very frequent attendant at its meetings, or as taking any personal part in its debates; and we may infer a little indifference to its objects when we find him noted (together with his stepson, Sir Berkeley Lucy, and his old friend Dr. Mapletoft) as a defaulter in his weekly contributions, and summoned to pay up the subscription which he had suffered to fall into arrear.† And it was probably as a tribute of respect to his character and position, rather than to his scientific attainments, that, at a later period of his life, he was appointed, in company with Sloane and Halley, on the Council of the Society.

In the year 1680, also, commences Nelson's correspondence with Tillotson, for our acquaintance with which we are indebted to the fragments of the letters which have been preserved by Birch in his life of the archbishop. Thus, in July of this year, we find Tillotson writing to his young friend, (who had recently been visiting him at his deanery at Canterbury,) in vindication of a hasty and ill-advised sermon that he had preached in April at Whitehall before the Court. In this discourse Tillotson had pushed his principle of latitude in matters of doctrine to an extreme that no honest faith in revelation could tolerate, and he had ventured on the extraordinary position, that no man, (unless miraculously commissioned) had a right to propagate his religious convictions without the consent of the

* Birch's "History of the Royal Society," vol. iv. p. 32.

† "Minutes of the Royal Society, 1699-1712." MSS. Brit. Mus. 3342.

civil magistrate. Such an expression of indifference to all religious truth raised a storm of ridicule and indignation. "Sir, sir," exclaimed a courtier to the king, "do you hear Mr. Hobbes in the pulpit?" Hickes poured out his invective against such a betrayer of the Faith. Patrick was in consternation at such sentiments from his friend: "It is plain that he was not awake, nor had his wits about him when he wrote it." Howe offered his animadversions on behalf of the dissenters. And we cannot wonder that Nelson should have expressed himself concerned at such opinions proceeding from one whom he respected and esteemed, while Tillotson faintly attempts to excuse himself in reply. In the following month of August we find them corresponding on a subject where they were surer of mutual sympathy, viz., the remarkable conversion of the Earl of Rochester, afterwards recorded by Burnet. A few days later Nelson joins his uncle, Sir Gabriel Roberts, in asking Tillotson's interest to procure the rectory of Barnes, in Surrey, for their friend Dr. Kidder; and Tillotson owns the force with which the recommendation comes to him from his young friend, "as of all men most likely to command me in anything you should desire:"* while later in the year again, the differing tendency of their minds upon matters of religion betrays itself in the inquiries that Nelson makes, respecting the dean's rumoured demolition of some architectural ornaments in his cathedral; in reply to which Tillotson writes back to his friend at Dryfield, that he

"Only took down the sun over the skreen behind the communion-table, which was done with so little noise that several days passed before it was taken notice of to be removed; and nothing done besides, not so much as the table stirred out of its place."†

Nelson's visit to his mother at Dryfield seems to have

* Birch, p. 53.

† *Idem*, p. 77.

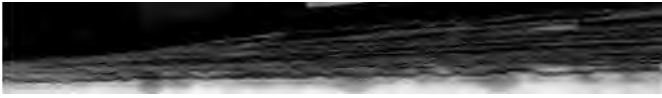
been preparatory to the tour he was about making on the Continent, in company with his old schoolfellow Edmund Halley.* Halley was a few months younger than his friend, but had already raised himself to distinction among the astronomers of the day. When but twenty years of age, he had been sent by Charles II. to St. Helena, in order to perfect a catalogue of fixed stars in the Southern hemisphere. He had just returned from a scientific mission to Dantzic, whither he had been sent at the instance of the Royal Society; and he was now proceeding to France and Italy, in order to communicate with the astronomers of the Continent. The two friends quitted England at the close of 1680, and on their journey, between Calais and Paris, obtained their first view of the celebrated comet, upon which Halley founded his cometary theory. It furnished matter for correspondence between Nelson and Tillotson, who still continued a frequent interchange of letters; the dean taking advantage of his young friend's arrival amid the temptations of Parisian life, in order to express in the warmest of terms his confidence and esteem:

“If I am able, I need not to advise you in anything, so well am I assured of your virtue and good conduct. I pray for you continually, that God would preserve you, and return you safe and the same to us, and give you all the advantages you expected, and will, I am sure, endeavour to make by your travels. I never know how to part from you, but my business calls me off.”

Tillotson's commendation of Nelson's youthful principles takes off the air of eulogium from some verses of an admirer, who thus describes his early piety and goodness: †

* Biograph. Britan. art. Halley.

† From “A Poem in Memory of Robert Nelson, Esq. *Daphnin ad astra feremus, amavit nos quoque Daphnis.*” 1715.



Pious Robert Nelson.

15

“Happy the man, whom Heaven did so compose
That every Virtue from his temper flows ;
So just the frame, he wants not Reason’s art
To win the passions, nor to warm the heart ;
Through heedless youth by happy impulse goes,
And loves the Virtue that not yet he knows.”

Nelson’s principles were now about to receive their earliest trial. He had carried with him to Paris a letter of introduction to Henry Savile, the English envoy, which Tillotson had procured for him from the Earl of Halifax, Savile’s brother. Lord Halifax writes, November $\frac{1}{2}$, 1680 :*

“I am desired by my very good friend the Dean of Canterbury, to recommend this gentleman, Mr. Nelson, to your kind reception, which as you give it by your place to everyone that speaketh English, so I am sure you will not refuse it more particularly to him, that he may join with all our other travellers in your praises for an affable minister.”

The published correspondence between Halifax and his brother yields but a poor impression of Henry Savile’s character, as that of a place-hunting courtier, dubious in his morals and mercenary in his dealings. And it was probably some selfish interest of his own, rather than the esteem he affected for Nelson’s character, which prompted a proposal for purchasing a place at Court, which he shortly made to his new acquaintance. It was in April, 1681, that Nelson, being still at Paris, received from Savile, then on a visit to London, a proposition which, if accepted, would have exposed his early manhood to all the corruption of Charles the Second’s Court, which might have given an entirely different complexion to all his after life, and (combining with his personal attachment to the royal family) might have changed the earnest and munificent Churchman into the mere intriguing Jacobite

* “Savile Correspondence,” printed for the Camden Society, 1858, p. 168.

politician. And the offer was not without temptation to one whose person and fortune and accomplishments peculiarly fitted him to shine amid the gaieties of a Court, and whose only foible, it has been said,* was his fondness for richness of dress and distinction of personal appearance. Nelson himself seemed inclined to take the proposal into consideration, but dutifully referred it to the maturer judgment of his friends at home, who made Tillotson their spokesman on the occasion. He writes from London, on the 28th of April, as follows:†

“But now to the main business, to which I find your Uncle so absolutely averse, that he did not think fit your Mother should be acquainted with it. It is well, if you escape chiding from him. As for myself, than whom no person in the world can wish you better, since you are pleased to repose that kind confidence in me, as to ask my advice, I will faithfully give it. In the present uncertainty of things, I would not have you venture so considerable a sum, as those places go at; and unless *somebody* grow better, which I hope God will grant, the temptations, to which a man must be exposed in that station, are like to be so violent, as would set the firmest virtue hard, even my friend’s, of whom I have so good an opinion. Your Mother hath but just mastered the trouble of your absence, which, I understand by your Aunt Hanger, was for a great while very grievous to her; and therefore you will, I am sure, be very tender of giving any new occasion. I will wait upon Mr. Savile, and make the best acknowledgements I can of his great civilities and favours to you, and let him know how your friends stand affected in this matter, to whose judgement and determination you have referred it.”

And in the next letter of the dean, addressed to Nelson at Saumur, on the 2nd of June, 1681, he thus continues the subject:‡

“I wish your good opinion of my judgement were as well grounded, as that of my sincere friendship and

* Seward’s “Anecdotes,” ii. 90. † Birch, p. 84. ‡ *Idem*, p. 85.

affection for you most certainly is. Your mother is perfectly well satisfied, as I told her she had great reason, since you referred yourself to the advice and judgment of your friends; by which I assured her you would most certainly govern your resolution. I shall be glad to see England so happy, as that the Court may be a fit place for you to live in. I waited on the ambassador, and made the best acknowledgements to him I could of his great favours and civilities to you, and particularly in that kind offer he had made you. But I told him that your friends had no mind to it, especially as things now are; and I knew you would do nothing against their inclination; with which he was well satisfied, declaring the very great kindness and esteem he had for you and for your friend Mr. Halley, in which I did not contradict him."

It was with a remembrance surely of his own temptation and danger at this period of his life, that Nelson, amid his meditations for All-Saints' day, wrote the following paragraph of advice as to the choice of our company.

"It concerns all good Christians to take care in this point; for the contagion of vice is powerful, and their greatest security is in standing at a distance from it; the frailty of virtue is great, therefore all cautions should be used not to expose it to an infectious air. But young men, when they first appear in the world, ought to have a particular regard to it, their future happiness, both temporal and eternal, depending so much upon the qualifications of those they converse with. Though they have received good principles in their education, yet they want practice to confirm the habits of virtue and courage, to resist the allurements of vice. They are apt to catch at any thing that indulges and countenances their irregular appetites. The misfortune is, when they want prudence most, they have least of it; therefore it is happy when they will listen to the advice of their parents, or some experienced relation, who is able to direct them in an affair of such consequence."

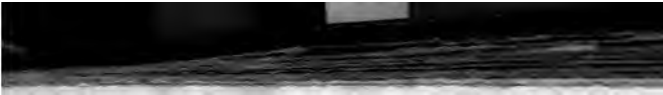
Relinquishing his thoughts of Court life in England, Nelson now proceeded from Saumur, on his travels to

Lyons and Rome, at which latter place he parted company with his friend Halley, who now returned to England. His own stay at home is remarkable, as procuring him the acquaintance of Lady Theophila Lucy, (widow of Sir Kingsmill Lucy, of Broxbourne, Bart., and daughter of George, the first earl of Berkeley,) who is said to have become so violently enamoured of his person that she could not forbear expressing her affection for him, and who in the following year became his wife. They returned to England in company, in August, 1682, Nelson proceeding to his mother at Dryfield, and paying a passing visit on his road to his faithful friend at Canterbury, Lady Lucy going to her father's seat of Durdans, near Epsom.

It was but two days after her arrival, (August 20, 1682,) that the honor of the Berkeley family was shamefully outraged by the abduction of her younger sister, Henrietta, then but eighteen years old, by the Lord Grey of Warke, who was himself married to another sister, the Lady Mary. Lady Lucy hastened after her sister's seducer to Guildford, and in vain endeavoured to recover her to her family; and on the melancholy trial* which followed in the subsequent November, she was the only member of it who seemed to be able to speak at once with self-possession and spirit. Her endeavours were unsuccessful to retrieve the character of her sister; nor did happier results follow from a most earnest letter of remonstrance which Tillotson addressed to Lady Henrietta, and which Nelson, from respect to his friend, whose epistolary talent he greatly admired, or from sympathy with the family with which he was about to be allied, was at the pains of transcribing for himself.

His own marriage with Lady Lucy was deferred till after the trial of Lord Grey for the offence, November 23,

* State Trials, vol. ix. p. 290.



1682, and may possibly have taken place with a privacy of which the melancholy circumstances of the Berkeley family would afford sufficient explanation. There is no reason to suppose but that their union received the approval of their friends on either side, and, as far as fortune and position were concerned, it was a sufficiently suitable alliance. If Nelson was but of plebeian extraction, Lord Berkeley had himself married the daughter of a London merchant; Lady Lucy had an ample settlement, and Nelson's fortune seems always to have been considerable, his father having left him in his infancy a house and land at Cretingham in Suffolk, with £3000 in money, to which must be added a share in the residue of the paternal estate, and the succession to his younger brother Gabriel's inheritance, besides the natural accumulations of his own minority. A supposed disparity of years between Nelson and his wife is a matter which has been thought more open to exception. "She was old when he married her," is the blunt account of an early biographer.* She had borne three children to her former husband, and her son, Sir Berkeley Lucy, was now twelve years old;† yet she is stated to have been only about twenty-eight at the time of her second marriage, in the affidavit made on the occasion by Sir Gabriel Roberts,‡ while Robert Nelson was now twenty-six years of age. So small a difference in their ages was not likely to prove a bar to the happiness of their married life. Nelson watched over his wife's declining health, with conscientious and

* Anecdotes of Bowyer, p. 3.

† Gent. Mag. xxix. p. 551. "1759. Nov. 19. Ob. Sir Berkeley Lucy, aged 87."

‡ March 24th, 1682-3. Sir Gabriel prays for licence of marriage in St. Laurence Jewry. No entry of the marriage however is to be found in the Register of that Church, nor yet in that of St. John's, Clerkenwell, where Lord Berkeley's town house was situated, or in that of Cranford, Middlesex, to which seat he removed after the disgrace which had fallen on his family at Durdans. The Register of Epfom Parish (in which Durdans is situated) does not go back beyond 1694.

unwearied attention,* during an union of three-and-twenty years. His friend Smallridge bears testimony in his epitaph to his conjugal affection:—

(eam) Aquiligranum usque valetudinis
 Recuperandæ causâ proficentem, lubenter
 Comitatus, ad extremum vitæ terminum
 Summo amore fovit, morte divulgâ
 Per novem annos superstes plurimum desideravit.

It may be more conclusive to remark, that he was always on the best of terms with the family of his wife, and a constant and welcome guest of Lord Berkeley's at Cranford; and that in his last will he provided for his interment in Cranford churchyard by her side.

He continued for a few years after his marriage to live in London, residing in the parish of St. Martin in the Fields, whence he addressed the following letters† to his friend Dr. Mapleton, at Ipswich:—‡

London, the 3d May, 1684.

“DEAR SIR,—I could not possibly resist so fair an opportunity, as Mr. Taylor, the bearer hereof, gives me of writing to you. The true friendship I have for you makes me interest myself in all your concerns, and I cannot but rejoice that you are fixed to your satisfaction, though I suffer for the want of your good company; and I have that concern for the welfare of the public, as patiently to submit when I am sure such sensible advantages will accrue to it. Mr. Taylor, Sir, desired me to recommend him to

* That this attention on the part of the husband was hardly merited by the amiability of the wife, seems hinted in the awkward eulogium of the rhymster previously quoted, who represents his hero as choosing Virtue rather than Pleasure.

In Lucy's beauty Virtue did appear,
 So shone her eyes, such was her voice and air, }
 Awfully kind and lovingly severe.

A portrait of Lady Theophila Nelson is said to be preserved in Berkeley Castle. *Musgrave Adversaria*. Brit. Mus. Art. Nelson.

† *European Magazine*, vol. xv., pp. 91, 186.

‡ Dr. Mapleton had been appointed to a Lectureship in that town, in the previous January.



your acquaintance, and he being to settle at Ipswich, is not ignorant of the advantages of your friendship. I have known him ever since I have had the happiness to be related to my Lord Berkley's family, and have alwaies found him a man of a very good temper, and to have given sufficient proofs of his good conduct ; which good qualities being joined with sobriety and learning, as they make him in a great measure fit for the great character he bears of being one of God's immediate servants, so I am sure they will entitle him to your respect ; and if I have the vanity to think that your esteem of him will not be lessened by my recommendation, your pardon is due to the presumption of one that sincerely loves you. Pray be so kind as to let me know the state of my aunt Applewhite's condition, not as if you enquired from me, but from yourself ; one of her sons I have provided, and in the last hard weather sent her 5l. I shall do much as you shall advise me. My humble service to Mrs. Mapletoft. No man wishes you more real happiness than, Sir,

“Your most affectionate friend and servant,

“R. NELSON.”

“To my worthy friend Dr. Mapletoft,
att Ipswich.”

“THOUGH, Sir I have not yet answered your letter, yet I took care to satisfy the contents of them, and have paid to Mr. Firmin 15l. 10s. which pays all the debts and includes the quarteridge besides: for the time to come if you will be pleased to give me credit every quarter-day, I will be sure to repay it here to Mr. Firmin ; which I desire to be put in mind of, not only as it may prove an help to my memory, but also as it may secure me your correspondence four times a year. I am sorry any reason has prevailed with my aunt to neglect her duty to God in the public worship. Pray satisfy yourself of her amendment in that particular, or else she will incur my displeasure ; and if you please let her know that except I have a good account of her attendance at Church, I shall be discouraged in my kindness to her. The character I have had of her makes me think her very unfit for keeping a

school, but if she cannot employ herself otherwaies, 'tis better than being idle. The Court is come to be my neighbour att St. James, where 'twill continue till Easter Munday, before which time 'tis expected the Queen-Dowager will be removed to Somerset-house. Two days ago arrived the Duke of Ormond, and was received by the King with all possible demonstrations of kindness and civility. The common topicks of discourse at Court are the business of the Coronation and the Election of Parliament men, neither of which subjects can afford you any news, unless you would be diverted by the ridiculous claims that are made by several that hold lands of the Crown. My humble service to Mrs. Mapletoft.

"I am, Sir,

"Your most affectionate humble servant,

"R. NELSON."

London, 5th April, 1685.

"To Dr. Mapletoft, att Ipswich, in Suffolk."

Date torn off.*

"I RETURN you, Sir, my thanks for the pains you have taken in my relation's concern, which though I can only acknowledge, yet being a piece of charity, you will not fail of a reward from a better hand. My mother has sent her a piece of stuff to clothe her and her children, which may be equivalent to the 40s. you desired for her. The King this day met his parliament, but has deferred speaking to them concerning the reasons of calling them till they had taken the oaths and test. My Lord Keeper commanded them from the King to choose a Speaker: they immediately without any contest chose Sir John Trevor, who this afternoon has his Majesty's approbation. The House of Lords is adjourned till Friday, when 'tis expected the King will make his speech; the time between this and that will be taken up in swearing the members. My humble service to Mrs. Mapletoft.

"I am, Sir,

"Your obliged humble servant,

"R. NELSON."

* Sir John Trevor was chosen Speaker, 19 May, 1685.



It was during this residence in London that Nelson's attachment to his wife was severely tested by the avowal of her conversion to the Roman Catholic faith. Her change of religion was owing to the conversations she had had at Rome with Cardinal Howard, and subsequently at Paris with the celebrated Bossuet.

Philip Howard had been placed at Cremona for education by his grandfather, the Earl of Arundel, collector of the marbles bearing his name; he had taken holy orders in the Roman Church, and after a short stay in England upon the Restoration as chaplain to Queen Catherine, he received a cardinal's hat from Pope Clement X. in 1675. At Rome he acted as patron of the English Romanists, and was commonly called the Cardinal of England; while to Lady Theophila he would have a further special introduction from his relationship with the Berkeley family.

Bossuet, the celebrated Bishop of Meaux, was now in the height of his reputation, and bore no inconsiderable part in the Romanist movement, which was now taking place in England under the restored Stuarts. Among his personal converts are to be reckoned Lord Lovat, the unfortunate Jacobite leader of 1745, who was admitted by him into the Romish church at Paris, in 1703; and Lord Perth, the Chancellor of Scotland, whose conversion was owing to the perusal of his celebrated "*Exposition of the Catholic Faith.*"

The different controversial works of Bossuet were translated and published in London, immediately upon their appearance in Paris, and engaged the pens of our ablest divines. James II. had formed the design of inviting him over into England, for the purpose of holding a conference with the leading theologians of the Anglican church. The examples, the persuasions, the threats of the English court were now all exerted on the Romish side. The Duchess of York, the daughter of Clarendon, printed her reasons for

her conversion ; and Charles II. left for publication after his decease the motives which he had been too cowardly or careless to avow during his life. Places of honour and trust were showered upon Roman Catholics. Henry Savile had to choose between his office of Vice-Chamberlain and the Protestantism which he had paraded at Charenton. A stream of distinguished converts followed. James Cecil, Earl of Salisbury, with his Countess and his two brothers, deserted the faith of which the founder of their family, Elizabeth's great statesman, had been so sturdy a supporter. Sir Ellis Leighton, the brother of the Archbishop, joined the religion of the dominant powers. Sir Thomas Grosvenor lost his lady—the Elizabeth Ebury who brought the Westminster estates into his family—to the church that was in fashion at court. And Samuel Pepys durst not press his wife to go to church for fear she should “declare herself a Catholique,” and deny him. Peter Manby, the Dean of Londonderry, Sclater the minister of Putney, Charnock, and Maffey, and Obadiah Walker the Master of University, headed the renegade churchmen, while Dryden and Wycherly brought the homage or the support to their newly adopted faith which literary ability could offer.

Lady Theophila Nelson was thus but one of the many who now yielded to the current of theological opinion, and was carried into the bosom of the Romish church, from which no endeavour of her husband or of his friends was able afterwards to reclaim her. Tillotson, as was natural, exerted himself upon the occasion, and was at the pains to address to her a long letter of remonstrance, concluding to the following effect,*

“That he did not doubt her ladyship was as much wearied in reading so long a letter as himself was in writing it, and that she might imagine his time lay heavy upon his

* Birch's Life, p. 120.

hands, but the truth was, that everything which related to Mr. Nelson lay so near his heart, that he could not say less upon such an occasion."

Nelson is also said* to have enlisted his friend Hickes in a similar effort, and the dean is stated to have written or at least to have published on Lady Theophila's account, his "Letters to a Popish Priest upon occasion of a Young Gentlewoman's departing from the Church of England to that of Rome." But Nelson was not known to Hickes till a later period of his life, when they were made acquainted by their mutual friend, the meek and pious Kettlewell. The volume alluded to, moreover, was not published till 1705, but a year before Lady Nelson's death, and an inspection of the letters will show that the gentlewoman intended was a very different person, with whom Hickes was brought into communication by her brother in 1703. And the misapprehension which has identified her with Lady Nelson must have been grounded on a very cursory glance at the title-page of the volume, and the dedicatory epistle that follows to Robert Nelson, Esq.

But whoever might be the divines against whom Lady Theophila had to maintain her newly-formed opinions, she was abundantly able to defend her cause. And she is said to have added to the vast array of controversial pamphlets, which then made their appearance on either side, 457 of which are enumerated by Francis Peck in his Catalogue,† without exhausting the titles of every one. Bossuet was now answered by Wake, and by Dodwell. John Goter, the author of "The Papist Represented and Misrepresented," received replies from Dr. Clagett, and from Williams, afterwards Bishop of Chichester. Godden's Conference found

* Nichols, "Lit. Anec." i. 17.

† "A Catalogue of the Discourses written for and against Popery in the time of King James II. By Francis Peck, London. 1735."

an assailant in Stillingfleet, then Dean of St. Paul's, while Lewis Sabran engaged against Sherlock. Andrew Pulton, the head of the Jesuit establishment in the Savoy, held a conference in Long Acre with Tenison, the vicar of St. Martin's in the Fields. Atterbury was the apologist of our Reformation, Smallridge wrote upon Church-government, and Burnet vindicated our orders. Either side affected to find their champions in the ranks of the people. Thomas Ward, a Romanist schoolmaster, and a quondam Guardsman, entered the lists with Tenison, as "a Catholic Soldier;" while "a Protestant Footman, living with Madam H—— in Mark-lane", defended Sherlock's "Preservative from a Jesuit." Lady Nelson is said* to have been the author of "A Discourse concerning a Judge of Controversy in Matters of Religion, showing the necessity of such a Judge," which appeared in 4to. in 1686. It was thought deserving of an elaborate reply† on the Protestant side by so eminent a writer as Sherlock, and it is written with a vivacity and clearness which yield no mean impression of the intellectual capacity of the lady whom Nelson had espoused.

But the moral trial must not escape our notice which would result from such a determined contrariety of religious opinion as now existed between Nelson and his wife. The Christian biographer will accept her conversion as part of God's providence for disciplining his soul. And most fitting it was that one so favoured as he was with the world's smiles, and so richly endowed with natural gifts, and wanting nothing, as men would speak, to make him happy, should have one such vexation at his heart, as a continual occasion for self-government and watchfulness.

* Birch, p. 120.

† "A Discourse concerning a Judge of Controversies in Matters of Religion, being an Answer to some Papers asserting the necessity of such a Judge. With an address to wavering Protestants, shewing what little reason they have to think of any change in their Religion. 1686."

The secession of his wife to the Romish Church has the further advantage of giving additional prominence to Nelson's own firm and deliberate adhesion to our Reformed religion. The claims of the Church of Rome were thus brought before him, in the closest way, at an early period of his life; and the effect was only to elicit from him the strongest expression of his dissent from, and his repugnance to, her distinctive errors. He too became a pamphleteer in the absorbing controversy of the day, and was the author of an anonymous tract on Transubstantiation, which appeared at the beginning of 1688. A challenge had been thrown down upon the Romanist side in "A Seeker's Request to Catholic Priests and Protestant Ministers for satisfying his Conscience in the truth of what he ought to believe of the Lord's Supper;" the writer feigning to be a plain man, who understood neither Greek nor Latin, asking for only one or two express texts of Scripture, for or against the doctrine of the real Presence, as taught in the Church of Rome, and declaring himself "resolved to be either Catholic or Protestant, as the verdict upon this trial shall go." This brought out (as was intended), "the Catholic Answer to the Seeker's Request," appealing to St. John vi. 48, and to the words of Institution, St. Matthew xxvi. 26; and coarsely threatening to "unkennel the fox," and expose the Protestant resort to metaphorical interpretation:—"If they go to figures and parables, we know how to handle them." To this candid and elegant pair of controversialists, Nelson thought proper to reply in his "Transubstantiation contrary to Scripture, or the Protestant's Answer to the Seeker's Request." He had evidently been brought into personal collision with the writers, and felt himself bound to take notice of their productions, for the sake of a friend in whom he was interested. This tract possesses a natural interest, as the earliest pub-

lication which proceeded from his pen; and this circumstance, with the rarity of its occurrence, will be sufficient apology for somewhat lengthy quotations. It opens with a vivacity and a pleantry of manner, which will be strange to those who are only acquainted with his subsequent devotional compositions :

“ Sir,” he begins, “ You are the pleasantest *Seeker* I ever met with; for you first suppose controversies already determined, and then *seek* a way to resolve them. What greater dispute have we had, than whether the title of Catholick justly belongs to those of the Church of Rome, so as to exclude all that are not of her communion? But this you give up in the person of a *Seeker*, calling those Catholicks by way of distinction from us, who call us by the name of Hereticks. If you do not know the meaning of the word, you are a *Seeker* indeed; if you do, and give it so to them as to exclude us, we do by no means allow you to be a *Seeker*; for you have found that which none but the Donatists had found before you, viz. that a leg or arm may be called the whole body. But in this matter I am the greatest *Seeker* of the two, for I am to seek both for sense and reason in it.

“ Call us *Protestants* as often as you please; it puts us in mind of errors renounced by us under that name which we are not ashamed of, as long as we know there was so great reason for it; and we think we have reason enough to satisfy any impartial *Seeker*; but for *blind Seekers* there is nothing so proper as an implicit faith and transubstantiation. Of all subjects methinks a *Seeker* should not have pitched on transubstantiation, unless he were to *seek* for his senses; and of all places he should not have sought for it in Scripture, unless he were resolved as well to *seek* where it was not, as where it was to be found.”

“ Indeed the Scriptures are so slight a foundation for the superstructure of Transubstantiation, that the most discerning men of the communion of the Church of Rome, who have been eminent for learning, have frankly confessed the whole matter; and thought their faith in this

particular wanted an adventitious support, which has made them (though in vain) call upon ancient Fathers, and the authority of the Church for help at time of need. Now one would have thought this might be taken notice of by one that sets up for a *Seeker*: but 'tis a sign you are but lately engaged in this employment, and have made but a little progress in your design; or else you could never think it reasonable to oppose the authority of one unknown answerer of that communion, to the profest opinion of so many great divines in that Church. But because I am willing to further the proposal of an impartial enquiry, so agreeable to Protestant principles, and so contrary to Popish ones: I will direct you to places which you may examine at your own leisure, where you will find this point freely granted by our adversaries.

“Amongst these I shall begin with Scotus, who held (saith Bellarmine), that there was not one place of Scripture so express, that without the determination of the Church, it would evidently compel a man to receive Transubstantiation. To him I may add Cardinal Alliaco* Gabriel Biel,† Fisher Bishop of Rochester,‡ and Cardinal Cajetan,§ who saith, particularly, that these words, ‘This is my body,’ are not sufficient to prove it, setting aside the authority of the Church, since there is *nothing appears from the Gospel to enforce one to believe that they are to be taken properly*. Which words are so express that they were left out in the Roman edition by the order of Pope Pius the V. as Suarez saith. ||

“I shall conclude this point with Bellarmine, who after he had recited the opinion of Scotus, that there is no place of Scripture so express, &c. adds, ‘And that is not altogether improbable: For although the Scriptures seem to us to be so clear, that they compel a man not obstinate; yet it may deservedly be doubted, seeing the most learned and acute men, such as Scotus was, thought otherwise.’ And as it’s confessed of the words of consecration, ‘This is my body,’ so the 6th chapter of St. John has undergone the

* In 4 Sent, q. 6, art. 1.

§ In 3 p. Tho. q. 75, art. 1.

† In Can. Mis. Lect. 40.

|| Tom. 3, Disp. 46.

‡ Contra, Capt. Babyl. n. 8.

same fate. Albertinus, who went to the bottom of this controversy in his excellent Treatise *de Euchar.** reckons up about thirty learned of several degrees in the Roman communion, who reject the application of that chapter as not serving to this purpose. Methinks these full and free concessions should sufficiently satisfy you how little they of the Church of Rome lay the stress of this cause upon the clearness of Scripture; and 'tis likely if you had known it, you would have been discouraged in your attempt."

He then proceeds to examine the passages which the Answerer had alleged, as conclusive for the doctrine of transubstantiation. And he ventures to argue at length that the discourse of our Saviour in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel had no special reference to the Sacrament; an interpretation in which he does but follow Bishop Jeremy Taylor, to whom he was also indebted for his previous list of authorities, but which our own church distinctly negatives in her communion office, where she borrows from this chapter to express the benefits we receive by the Holy Sacrament:—"For then we spiritually eat the flesh of Christ and drink his blood, then we dwell in Christ and Christ in us."

Upon the second passage alleged, viz., the sentence of consecration, "This is my body," with more justice Nelson exclaims, "Where is one word here of all that makes up the doctrine of transubstantiation?"

"Where, that the *This*, whatever it means, is the true body and blood, together with the soul and divinity of our Lord Jesus, in the self-same substance wherein he was born of the Virgin? Where, that this true body and blood, is truly, really, and substantially contained under the forms of bread and wine? Where, that the bread and wine are upon consecration turned into the true body and blood of Christ? And with submission to you, I would only ask, What is the *This*, of which Christ saith, it is *my body*?"

* L. 1 c. 390, p. 20.

If it be bread, then the bread is in the literal sense, the substance of Christ's body, and so overthrows the change pretended to be made in transubstantiation; for a thing cannot be said to be changed into what it is already; if by the *This* is not meant the *bread*, then the bread could never be turned into the body of Christ by virtue of the words, *This is my Body*; let the Answerer take his choice."

He proceeds to argue that,—

"There are many things in our blessed Saviour's institution, and administration of the holy Supper, that cannot have a literal sense. As, when he saith, 'This is my body, which is broken for you;' before it was broken. 'This cup is the New Testament in my blood,' St. Matt. xxvi., 26, 28; 1 Cor. xi. 24.

"And then, if we give a figurative explication of the words, 'This is my body;' we may by so doing no more depart from the true sense of them, nor in the Answerer's prophane phrase, no more *give Christ the lie*, than they themselves, or we do, when both do take the cup for the wine in the cup; and the wine in the cup for the sign or seal of the New Testament."

He urges that we have the very letter of Scripture in our favour, declaring that there is no substantial change of the elements upon consecration, but that they remain of the same substance, and are as really and properly bread and wine after consecration as before. For St. Paul calls it five times bread after he had related the institution, 1 Cor. xi. 26, 27, 28; x. 16, 17; and the whole solemnity had from it the name of "breaking bread," Acts ii. 42; xx. 7; and our Saviour himself, after he had said "This is my blood," in the next verse calls it "the fruit of the vine." St. Matt. xxvi. 28, 29; St. Mark xiv. 24, 25. He argues that the words, "*This is my body*," must be understood figuratively, the bread being the figure, the representation, the memorial, the communication of Christ's body. He is

careful to add, that it by no means follows that the Sacrament is nothing but a figure.

“For we always esteem this Sacrament as a divine institution and means of grace, and that by a worthy participation of it, we partake of that grace which is thereto promised, therein exhibited, and thereby conveyed. So that though we own it to be *a figure of Christ's body*, and that it's to be celebrated *in remembrance of His death*; yet that 'tis *only* a figure, and *only* a remembrance, is a pure invention.”

He concludes by addressing a sarcastic observation to the Seeker on the insincerity of such an appeal to Scripture by a Romanist.

“I shall observe but one thing more, and that is the applause and commendation the Catholic Answerer gives to your zeal to know the truth, by trying what Scriptures they have for it, and what the Protestants have against it, and that he is far from blaming you in that procedure. I am afraid this is but a copy of his countenance. I am sure 'tis very opposite to the doctrine and practice of the Church of Rome, which has long time discovered the evil effects of being too familiar with the Bible, and therefore has wisely lockt it up in a language unknown to the common people, and suffers it to be read only by those who entirely submit their understandings to the sense of their Church. Alas! This dangerous book has given birth to many a pestilent heresie; and should people be too busie with it, the infection would increase, and soon overspread the world; at best 'tis apt to raise chimæras in good people's minds, and where they have their mother the Church at hand, how unsafe it is to seek for any farther directions. Besides, the same reason he gives for trying this doctrine by Scripture, because it imports an eternity of bliss or torment, will make people apt to desire the same assurance for other doctrines, and then farewell the worship of images, invocation of saints, purgatory, &c., with many other of their innovations and errors which depend upon tradition, and which his Church desires not so easily to part with.”

And he takes his leave of his adversary with a severity which suits ill with his natural gentleness of disposition.

“ And therefore, before you send another ‘ request,’ pray take a little more care to shew yourself sincere ; and that you either prove yourself in earnest so to be ; or if you have no regard to that, yet take some care that you better dissemble it.”

The Seeker offered no rejoinder to this answer of Nelson’s ; but left it to a friend to interpose in his behalf in “ A Catholic Letter to the Seeker ; or, a Reply to the Protestant Answer to the Seeker ;” while Williams (afterwards Bishop of Chichester), replied on Nelson’s side, and closed the debate with “ The Protestant Answer to the Catholic Letter to the Seeker ; or, a Vindication of the Protestant’s Answer to the Seeker’s Request,” 1688.

Nelson himself had probably by this time escaped from the “ Strife of Tongues” in London ; for his lady falling into an ill state of health, for the recovery of it he now passed with her into France, and went to Aix-la-Chapelle, where he continued some months, and from whence, after a brief visit to England at the end of the year, (where he found all things in confusion upon the withdrawal of the king,) he proceeded in his travels with his lady through France to Rome.

“ Never was any Englishman,” writes his intimate friend Dr. Francis Lee,* “ known to be so much carested as he in the different foreign courts which he visited, as the many letters written to him from princes, ministers of state, noblemen, and persons of character, do abundantly testify.”

During six months of his residence at Florence, he was engaged in a weekly correspondence with the Earl of Melfort, James the Second’s ambassador at the Court of Rome, to

* “ Life of Kettlewell,” p. 434.

whom he transmitted, from time to time, the political news which he received from England; and the unreserve with which he now threw himself into the arms of the Jacobite party cannot be better exhibited than by some quotations from the letters which Lord Melfort now addressed to him.* The first is dated May 6, 1690.

“SIR,—The favour I had of your letter of the 2nd instant was most welcome to me on every account, but most particularly because it brought me the good news of your’s and my lady’s safe arrival at Florence, which I assure you was most earnestly wished for, both by my Lady Melfort and myself.

“I most humbly thank you for your news. They are most particular, and the only trouble I have is that you have been at so much pains to write so much with your own hand. The pamphlette I have not had time to read, the post being just a-going, and it’s not half an hour since I had your letter, being just returned from Castello.

“By the French post we hear that in general all goes well for the King, and that the P. of Or(ange) is much hated. The Duke of Grafton would have used his popularity against the watermen to press some, and was soundly banged and thrown into the river, and narrowly escaped. I hope shortly to have better news to send you, and I am obliged not to fail of anything that can give me any occasion to let you and your lady know how much my Lady Melfort and I are,

“Sir, your most humble Servants,

“MELFORT.”

On the 3rd of June he assures his correspondent, that “the usurper is not to go to Ireland in person.” The following month (July 14th) he thanks Nelson for his better information:

“And though the news you send me seem to be much

* Register of the Right Honourable the Earl of Melfort’s Letters, despatched at Rome. Lansdowne MSS. Brit. Mus. 1163.

to our disadvantage, yet I must inform you it is not on the success of our affairs in Ireland, that the King's affairs depend; for if the French fleet do what we have good reason to believe it will do, it will not be much matter tho' Schomberg gain a dozen of such castles as Balengarie in Ireland. You may expect to hear shortly that the French fleet have at least showed themselves to the English coast, and perhaps they have given an alarm to some of its seaports, which, considering that Orange has but by his own account 10,000 men in England, and these not sufficient for the garrisons, may prove of some weight to his affairs."

After a fortnight's silence, on the 29th of July, Melfort complains, "Not having heard from you this long while, I am afraid you are sick." On the 12th of the following month, he forwards his news of the battle of the Boyne:

"The relation as sent us from France is, that there arrived three couriers from Ireland; one on the 24th to give an account all was lost, and the King come away; one on the 25th that the battle was gained, and Schomberg killed dead on the place, and the Prince of Orange shot in the shoulder and leg; and the last on the 28th with the news of the P. of Orange's death, two days after the bataille. At Versailles on 28th bonfires for P. of O.'s death."

On Sept. 9, he consoles himself under the disappointment of better information, that William's "wound is not likely to cure, and that they cannot stop the blood." Next week he buoys up his hopes, by

"A letter from a merchant in London to a correspondent in Paris, not to send him any lace, for if the news, says he, be true as we have them from Ireland, the court must go into mourning for the P. of Orange, and they will lie on my hand."

And on the 23rd, he takes comfort that "if Orange be not dead, he is deadly sick." While by October the 14th,

he has found leisure to balance the contradictory reports, and writes as follows :

“SIR,—I thank you for your news, and though I am sorry to put you to so much trouble, yet I cannot hinder myself from desiring you to continue it. The news of the last letters of the 18th from Paris, brings an account of the repulse that the Prince of Orange's army has had before Limerick, with the loss of 1300 men of their best troops, and that the sickness is got into his army again, so that they hope to keep out this winter in despite of him. The letters concerning him are various ; those who are within the town, and so worse informed, say that he is in the army, but others say he is dead at Dublin ; in short there is no certainty ; tho' to see the letters one would think him alive, yet there are so many against, that we must have patience till we can discover the truth.

“In Scotland affairs go well, and the Highlanders are much stronger than the rebels ; they have come down and possessed themselves of Aberdeen and Montrose, and the pass of Stirling, by which they are masters of the best countries of Scotland, and may live in ease and plenty, which will soon increase their party.

“I hope ere it be long to send you better news ; in the meantime I assure you that my Lady Melfort and I are both to my Lady Theophila and to yourself,

“Most humble servants,

“MELFORT.”

It was while Nelson was carrying on this political communication with Melfort, that he found himself called upon to address a controversial letter to a different kind of correspondent. His lengthened stay at Rome had given Lady Theophila an opportunity of renewing her acquaintance with Cardinal Howard.* And Nelson found himself

* A letter of this year's date from Cardinal Howard to Lady Theophila has been preserved by Thoresby, to whom it was given by Nelson, as an addi-

exposed to solicitations from one of his subordinates, which he thought proper to repel in the following thoughtful and manly letter to an English priest at Rome. It is an evidence of his natural modesty, and of the sincerity with which he professes at its close the distaste he had for controversy, that this excellent letter remained for fifteen years unpublished, until his friend Dr. Hickes obtained his leave to include it in a collection of *Controversial Pieces* which he published in 1705. It is there printed in company with Bishop Bull's tract on "The Corruptions of the Church of Rome," in reply to Bossuet, with the celebrated Charles Leslie's answer to the same queries of the Bishop of Meaux, and with Dr. Hickes' own Letters to a Popish priest in London.

"It is written," says Hickes, in the dedicatory epistle to his friend, "with that felicity of temper whereof you are master in great perfection; and by the benefit whereof you can discourse with all sorts of men, with whom you differ in matters of religion, in the same easy and obliging manner, as with those with whom you do agree."

tion to his collection of autographs. The Cardinal's long residence in a foreign country had evidently impaired his English grammar and orthography.

"Madame,—I am sorry that neyther whilst you were heare, nor since you went theather, I could not serve y^r Lad^{sh}. according to y^r desires, or my desires, although you are pleased to take so much notice by yours of y^e 23 currant, and that the Pri^r of S.M^a. Novella hath in some part endeavoured to supply my wants, as I shall acknowledge unto him at his arivall heare, wth desires to continue the same at his returne in the best manner he can, as also unto your good ould Lady, with Mr. Nelson and Sir Barkley. The same father Langton writeth me, he hath offered y^r Lad^{sh}. according unto his capacity, he being a good meaning man, w^{ch} is all that can be at present offered by

"Your Lad^{sh}."

"Most humble Serv^t. and Kindsman,

"CARD^L OF NORFOLKE."

R. 27 May, 1690.

Brit. Museum MSS. Birch, 4274. 158.

[*A Letter to an English Priest of the Roman Communion,
at Rome.*]

“I should not so long have neglected answering your obliging lines of the 30th of Sept. last, if I had not expected the happiness of your good company here at Florence; the postscript of your letter led me into this error, and Don John my Lord Cardinal's cup-bearer confirm'd me in it, and 'tis but lately I have been undeceiv'd. I am glad you had such satisfaction from your journey to Naples: I don't question the truth of that matter of fact of which you affirm yourself to have been an eye-witness; yet I cannot apprehend, how you can be assured that the *substance which you saw in the glass vial hard and dry like reddish earth, and which you might have crumbled with your fingers, was, when liquified, blood*; nor yet less that it was the blood of St. Januarius Bishop of Benevent, martyr'd in the time of Dioclesian, as you are pleas'd to affirm in your Letter. But I wonder most how you can pretend to be convinc'd with perfect evidence of sense, that there was no human artifice in this. The relation that your senses gave you, was only that upon the *contact of the silver case wherein is supposed to be deposited the head of the same Saint, the dry matter like reddish earth liquified, and became soft like a cake of blood*; now all this may be true, and yet the whole business an imposture. For one ought to examine what causes there may be in natural things capable to produce the same effect, and upon what authority this supposed miracle is established; for certainly you will not say, there has never been any false miracles pretended to in the Church of Rome. Therefore I conclude that the evidence of sense you had in this case, could not be a perfect conviction to you, that you was not imposed upon by the subtilty of others. I will not make any advantage of that disparagement you often put upon the evidence of sense in other cases, and consequently weaken the strength of its assurance; but I think the inference you draw from the whole, as lame as the former
viz., *That 'twas God alone did it, who one day*

will make dead bones and dead blood live; for miracles, when true, are not always the immediate effect of divine power, and angels both good and bad may do such things as exceed any natural power known to us. I am sure the Scripture tells us that the *working of Satan is with all power, and signs, and lying wonders*, and where the love of the truth is not received, *God will send strong delusions that they should believe a Lye*. I am not much concerned for the reflection you make upon our Church for want of miracles: 'twas the same thing in the time of St. Chrysostom, who in his sixth Homily upon the First Epistle to the Corinthians, shews the necessity and usefulness of them for the establishing Christianity, which being once effected, 'twas rather necessary they should cease than continue; for if miracles were always visible, faith would have less merit, and consequently less reward. I am thoroughly satisfied, that the Christian religion was confirm'd by the miracles of our Saviour and his apostles, which tho' they were not in that great abundance nor upon such trivial occasions, as are those produced by the Roman Church, yet they will much better bear the test of a strict examination, and carry greater evidences of their divinity. As for the proof of negatives, I govern myself by St. Paul's rule, that 'If any pervert the Gospel of Christ, or that he or an angel from Heaven should preach any other Gospel, let them be accursed.' This is the sure word of prophecy, whereunto you would do well to take heed, as unto a light, that shineth in a dark place.

"I would not be thought to detract from the virtue of Faith, for without it 'tis impossible to please God; tho' I cannot but observe that you mistake St. Paul when you make him say, *that tho' we give all we have to the poor, yet without Faith it avails nothing*. 'Tis to Charity he gives such a high encomium in that chapter; and lest Christians should lay too great a stress upon their orthodoxy in believing, he adds that *tho' one has all faith, so that he could remove mountains, and have no charity, he is nothing*. The parting with all one has, and the laying down one's very life, the two great instances our Saviour gives of the perfection of his doctrine, are not sufficient without this noble virtue. This is that more excellent way the

Apostle shew'd unto the Corinthians, and which he desired them earnestly to covet.

"I would not have you to mistake me, therefore ; I assure you, I no more take the Court of Rome, than I do the Roman Church, for the Catholick Church. But being, when at Rome, at the head, as you suppose, of unity, one may be thought likelier to get some knowledge of the body there, than in a pestilential northern air, and this was all I pretended to ; if you persist to think otherways, I submit.

"I have carefully considered what you say about Infallibility, and I cannot find you have in the least shaken the evidence of my proposition, *viz.*, *That Infallibility, the ground of all your delusions, has no foundation either in holy Scriptures or primitive antiquity.* 'Tis like a house built upon a rock, that can bear the attacks of the greatest subtilty, and can receive no prejudice from the artificial attempts that are made to destroy it. You ask me, *How I am persuaded of this ?* 'Tis only by having examined Scripture and antiquity, both which I find silent concerning this point. At the same time I own myself to be a man, which implies a creature subject to error, *Et nihil humani à me alienum esse puto* ; therefore you have no reason to assent to what I propose, till you have made the same tryal. And tho' I am not so unjust as to be angry with you for suspecting me to be in the wrong, yet it would have been much better for you to have proved it, than only to mistrust it ; for your letter brings no conviction of the interest that doctrine of Infallibility has either in Scripture or antiquity. All you quote from the one is our Saviour's promise of *being with his disciples to the end of the world.* And *why should we think, say you, he would be with them, but to preserve them from error ?* All that you urge from the other, is the *liberty the ancient councils took of making their definitions articles of faith ; as that Christ is consubstantial with the Father, &c.* which Creed we own and receive, and therefore consequently you infer we ought to embrace Infallibility of the Church. To both I will give you as plain and short answers as I can, *Et valeant quantum valere possint.* As

to the promise of our Saviour, which we find recorded in the 28th of St. Matth. 19, 20. "Go ye therefore, and teach all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father, and of the Son, and of the Holy Ghost, teaching them to observe all things whatsoever I have commanded you, and lo I am with you always, even to the end of the world:" All that can reasonably be drawn from this text is, that the Christian Church shall be always existent to the end of the world. Tho' if it were positive for its Infallibility, as it is for its existence, yet before it would do you any good, you must prove, that by *you*, is meant *you*, and *only you*, of the Church of Rome; that Christ has obliged himself not only to give sufficient means of direction, but that he will necessitate men to follow them, and that he will not only preserve them from all damnable errors, but also from all erroneous doctrines. Yet if this were granted, which you cannot expect from me; if the promise here be absolute, every one who has power to preach and baptize, might claim infallible assistance by vertue of it; and so every parish priest would have as good a title to Infallibility as the Pope and a General Council. 'Tis certain there is no difficulty in believing, that God could have promised to his Church a total preservation from error; as it is blasphemy to say he would not have made it good, if he had promised it. But our question is, whether he has promised it or no? Not what God is capable of doing? But what God has really and actually done? If you object I interpret Scripture by my own private reason which is liable to error, I would fain know a better method of proceeding, as long as the infallible Interpreter is the controversy in debate.

"I think the proof you bring from antiquity, makes as little to the purpose as that you have brought from the Scripture; for where is the consequence, that a General Council has explained an article of faith and that this explanation has been received by the Catholick Church, *ergo*, the Church of Rome is infallible. We receive the determinations of the Council of Nice, because they are agreeable to Scripture and to the sentiments of the fathers, both of the Greek and Latin Church, which preceded that

General Council. We reject the determinations of the Council of Ariminum, because they are contrary to both. So that our receiving them does not depend upon the opinion of their Infallibility. They never arrogated this privilege to themselves; for if they had pretended to it, they could not have neglected to have settled a matter of such importance as the foundation of all their proceedings, their silence in this case is worth a thousand arguments; for who can think it could be their interest to have concealed so great a treasure? And lest in time great inconveniences might happen by pretending to explicate the articles of faith, and by inserting those explications in the Creed; one of the first four General Councils, I think 'tis that of Ephesus (tho' I am not positive, for I have not books by me to clear it) made a decree, which prohibited the farther enlarging of the Creed by any additional explications, foreseeing those mischiefs which latter ages have felt, and with which particularly the Council of Trent has burthened us.

“I am not ignorant, that two of your great champions, Cardinal Perron and Petavius, to raise the authority of General Councils, and to make the rule of their faith appear more plausible, have aspersed not only the Holy Scriptures as incapable, by reason of their obscurity, to prove the great and necessary point of our Saviour's divinity; but have also impeached the fathers of the first three centuries as tardy in the same point, whose writings they say, touching this important article, *cum orthodoxæ fidei regulâ minimè consentiunt*. Blessed God! that men should be so fond of humane inventions, as to sacrifice to them those pillars of our faith, which are alone proper and able to support it, I mean Scripture and primitive antiquity. But to do justice to the memory of so learned a man as Petavius, the Bishop of Meaux told me, discouraging with him once on this subject, that in the last edition he made of his works, he retracted this opinion, which I am willing to believe upon the authority of that great man, whose admirable talents as well as particular favours challenge a great deal of respect and esteem from me, which I shall always pay him, tho' he is an adversary to the religion I profess. By this judge

what pitiful shifts your great Goliaths have been reduced to, when they have found themselves oppressed by the weight of truth. Christ's being consubstantial with the Father was believ'd long before the Council of Nice; 'twas no new doctrine invented by them, but only declared by them, to be and to have been the belief of the Church. You have hinted at the great advantages of the doctrine of Infallibility in order to the suppressing of schisms and heresies, but they are only so in speculation. Your Church itself does not think it sufficient for that purpose; or else she is very uncharitable to make use of the severer method of an Inquisition, and upon all occasions to call for the assistance of the temporal sword, as the surest means to suppress them. No, he that is disposed in mind to receive the decisions of any church as infallible without judging of them, is much likelier to fall into heresy, than he who thinks all such determinations must be examined by Scripture and primitive antiquity; since by this privilege the Pope and his faction challenge, of interpreting God's laws without error, 'tis easy for them to impose what they please, the power of making laws and the sole power of interpreting them being much akin. You add one thing more, that no Protestant can deny but 'that the state of the Church would be much better in being secured from error in her decisions, and therefore we cannot think but that Christ who did all things well, would do that which is best for his Church.' I think it is much safer arguing the contrary way, that Christ has not established any such power, and that therefore it is not best for the state of the Church. The ground of your assertion is too presumptuous, that what seems fit to human reason, should seem fit to the infallible judgment of God. 'Tis our duty to be thankful for those means God has left us to work out our salvation; and not to conclude he hath done that which he hath not done, because our shallow capacities judge it fit to be done. But what art thou, O man, that objectest against God?

“Christ has left us such excellent precepts of modesty, humility, patience, Christian forbearance, and charity, that the practice of them would make us much sooner

agree than any new method you can propose; at least if we do not agree, they will inspire us with such a noble temper, as heartily to compassionate one another, to live amicably and friendly together, and not be pulling out one another's eyes, because we do not see things the same way. This is that in which I would have always different parties zealous, for there is nothing wanting very often to extinguish ill will, but an opportunity for men to converse lovingly together, by which they will quickly perceive they are not such monsters, as they are represented to one another at a distance.

"This I endeavour, according to my weakness, to practice myself; this I inculcate into all my friends; that if we cannot agree in our opinions, yet to take care that they do not rob us of our charity and love of one another, which in the sight of God is of great price.

"You see what a long letter you have drawn upon yourself; it would have been disrespectful to you, as well as to truth, to have neglected an answer, and therefore I don't think myself oblig'd to make any apology. Tho' if you had known how much I have been surfeited with controversies upon a melancholy occasion, you would accept of this small attempt as a favour.

"I am, Sir,

"Your faithful humble servant,

"R. NELSON.

"Florence, 26 Dec. 1690."

While Nelson at Florence was carrying on this correspondence with political friends and theological antagonists at Rome, he was still maintaining at the same time his communications with his friend Tillotson in England. Just before his departure for the continent, he had been bestirring himself for the relief of the French Protestants at Canterbury, and despatching for them at Tillotson's request, a supply of French Bibles from town. We now (Feb 16,

'90-91) find the dean addressing him at Florence in reply to two letters he had recently received from him, giving him an account of the plot in which Turner, bishop of Ely, was implicated, and for which Lord Preston was condemned to death, touching upon the seduction of Lady Theophila and her daughter from the Protestant religion, and praying that God would preserve her husband, and her son, Sir Berkeley Lucy, in the truth.

"And so," adds he, "I do for those that are fallen from it, that God would grant them repentance to the acknowledgment of it. I pity poor Miss who is more innocently seduced, but my lady much more, considering the degree of her understanding, and the difference of the two religions."*

And amid the distractions which surrounded him upon his consecration to the primacy, he found time to reply to the letters which Nelson had just addressed to him from Florence and Venice, in the following May, and to pour out into his friendly ear the hesitations and perplexities which beset him in his new position.

"God and time," he writes, "can only tell what a man will prove in any condition. But I hope I cannot so far mistake myself, as not to be able to assure you, that no change of fortune can alter my mind towards you. The station in which I am now plac'd, is much more likely to make me weary of my life than of my friends.

"Since this calamity befel me, I have not yet had time to deliver Sir Berkeley's letter to his sister; which I intend to do at my first leisure. I was loth to visit her at Mr. Knox's; and it is less fit now. I think to send for her over to Mr. Beale's, and there to talk with her.

"My wife and my son desire to have their very humble services presented to yourself and my lady, to whom, and Sir B. L. I intreat you to tender mine.

* Birch, p. 238.

"I am glad that we are like to see you sooner than you thought. I pray God to preserve you all, and bring you safe to your friends; amongst whom I hope you will always reckon,

"Dear Sir, your faithful friend and servant,

"JO. CANT.

"P.S. You may think, Sir, by this letter, that time lies upon my hands; but it is you that lie so near my heart."

From the frankness of Tillotson's communications to Nelson upon political matters, it would seem that he was unaware of the extent to which his friend had engaged in the Jacobite cause. And it must have been one of the keenest mortifications attending his elevation to Sancroft's vacant chair, that he found himself compelled, at the end of the year, to abandon his early friend to the rival nonjuring communion. It was in December, 1691, when Nelson had reached the Hague on his return to England, and was making some stay there in the house of his brother-in-law, Lord Dursley, then envoy plenipotentiary to the States of Holland, that they exchanged letters upon a subject so interesting to them both. Nelson was fixed in his resolution not to acknowledge the government of William and Mary, but seems to have doubted whether he might not continue to attend the services of the established church in spite of his being unable to join conscientiously in the prayers for those whom he deemed usurpers. The new archbishop was the person whom he frankly asked to resolve his doubts, and Tillotson as frankly gave his opinion in reply : *

"As to the case you put, I wonder men should be

* Birch, p. 259.

divided in opinion about it. I think it plain that no man can join in prayers in which there is any petition which he is verily persuaded is sinful. I cannot endure a trick anywhere, much less in religion."

This opinion seems to have decided Nelson to join the nonjuring communion, and to have interrupted that confidential intercourse which he had so long enjoyed with the friend of his youth. No further correspondence between them is preserved by the biographer of the archbishop. Nelson, in the society of his nonjuring friends, contracted a still greater aversion for the latitudinarian principles of which Tillotson was the patron. And while he resented the attacks which were being so constantly made upon his former friend by Jacobite malevolence, yet he no longer took him for the guide of his life, and but seldom alludes to his name in all his subsequent writings. Only at Tillotson's death-bed did his former affection seem to revive and bridge over all their differences in politics and in religion. He attended him at Lambeth the two last nights of his life, and held him in his arms when he expired, after five days' illness, November 23, 1694. He continued the offices of kindness to Tillotson's widow, who was left in but narrow circumstances at his decease; and when the death of her son-in-law, Mr. Chadwick, a few years later, involved her in fresh embarrassments, he ventured an appeal to King William's Chancellor, the celebrated Lord Somers, in her behalf.

"My Lord.—I took the liberty to put Mr. Chancellor of the Exchequer* in mind of that favourable answer your Lordship procured from the King in reference to Mrs. Tillotson's affairs, in hopes that he would lay some proposals before his Majesty for his royal approbation, in order to

* Charles Montagu, made Chancellor of the Exchequer in 1694, and afterwards created Baron, and at last Earl of Halifax.

satisfy the necessity of Mrs. Tillotson's circumstances, and that they might be dispatched before the King's departure ; since, as I apprehend, matters of this nature suffer extremely by delay, and meet with the best success, when the sense of their fitness makes the deepest impression. The distance I live from town, and the aversion I have to be troublesome to great men, makes me ignorant of what progress Mr. Chancellor has made, though I must own he expressed great zeal to the memory of the Archbishop, and professed much readiness and inclination to serve Mrs. Tillotson.

"Your Lordship's generous procedure emboldens me to solicit the continuance of your favour, being confident, that your Lordship will receive a great deal of pleasure from seeing that finished, which your Lordship's great goodness has given a birth to. And if Mr. Montagu wants any incitement besides your Lordship's example, your Lordship's constant owning Mrs. Tillotson's cause will be an argument too powerful to be resisted. I have all the respect imaginable for your Lordship's post and character ; but I must profess, 'tis the experience of your Lordship's personal merit, which creates the profoundest respect of, my Lord,

"Your Lordship's most obedient

"and most humble servant,

"NELSON.

"Blackheath, July, 1698."

CHAPTER II.

NELSON WITH THE NONJURORS.

Nelson's acquaintance with the nonjuring Prelates.—His friendship with Kettlewell.—Letter to Archbishop Sharp respecting him.—His account of Kettlewell's sickness and death.—He edits his works.—Ken's letter to Nelson.—Nelson's friendship with Hickes.—Hickes' commendation and defence of Nelson's writings.—Thos. Bowdler.—Nelson's letter to Pepys.—Spinckes, Collier, and Lee.—The Shottisbrooke Nonjurors.—Mr. Cherry of Shottisbrooke House.—Brokesby; his letter to Nelson.—Dodwell; consults with Ken and Nelson on quitting the nonjuring Communion.—His correspondence with Burnet, published by Nelson.—Nelson's letter to a friend on quitting the nonjuring Communion.—He is received into the Established Church by Archbishop Sharp.—His motives for the change.—Still continues a Jacobite.—Two letters to Mapletoft.—Nelson reviews Harbin's Book on Hereditary Right.—Nelson's letter to Bedford.—Nelson presents the book to Queen Ann.—Procures a mitigation of Bedford's sentence.

ROBERT NELSON joined the nonjuring communion, as we have seen, on his return to England in 1691. He continued a member of that body, until the death of Bishop Lloyd, in 1709, enabled him with a good conscience to resume communion with the prelates of the Established Church. For the first eight years of this period he seems to have lived almost exclusively in the society of Nonjurors, and in comparative retirement from public life; pursuing those studies and imbibing those principles which prepared him to emerge at last to a position of eminent activity and usefulness.

With the prelates indeed of the Nonjurors he does not seem to have had any very intimate acquaintance. Of Bishops White and Turner no mention occurs in his correspondence. Of Sancroft he writes * from the report of

* See his "Life of Bull," p. 355.

others more than from personal knowledge. With Bishop Frampton of Gloucester, his father's friend, he was upon terms of correspondence.* With Bishop Lloyd of Norwich he was associated in a scheme for the relief of the necessitous Nonjurors. Bishop Ken he had frequent opportunities of meeting at the house of their common friend, Mr. Cherry, and he corresponded with him in his retirement at Lord Weymouth's seat of Longleat. But his most intimate friends were to be found in a little nonjuring circle at London, which embraced Kettlewell and Hickes; Thomas Bowdler, his own and Hickes' neighbour in Ormond Street, and Pepys, under whom Bowdler had worked at the Admiralty; Collier and Spinckes; Francis Lee, to whom he entrusted his materials for the "Life of Kettlewell," and Hilkiah Bedford, with whom he reviewed Harbin's book on Hereditary Right, previous to its publication. While another knot of his intimates was settled at Shottisbrooke, in Berkshire, comprising Mr. Cherry of Shottisbrooke House, Brokesby his chaplain, and Dodwell the Camden Professor of History at Oxford.

For the meek and gentle-natured Kettlewell, Nelson soon cultivated the warmest attachment, and found in him the bosom friend that he had lost in Tillotson. He had previously read some of Kettlewell's devotional works with much satisfaction, and now had recourse to him to supply his spiritual needs. And this religious intercourse between men of such congenial temperament rapidly grew into the closest of friendship,

* "Pray let Dean Hicks know that I have received a letter from Bishop Frampton, who says all the stories that are told of him in print are wicked lies. He has taken no oath nor has any been offered him; neither has he any aims or hopes of any preferments—his own out of which he was cast, or any better. The best in England or in Europe are not able to move him in the least; his hopes are placed on things above, not beneath. I give you his own words, and all that he writ me concerning my enquiry." Nelson to Wanley, Oct. 18, 1701.

“So that Mr. Nelson,” says his friend Lee, “would always ask Mr. Kettlewell’s advice in everything of moment that he set about, and would unbosom himself to him in the nicest and most difficult emergencies of life, that he might be directed by him; such an opinion had he of his wisdom, as well as of his integrity, in all that could be put to him. This sacred friendship that was between them failed not to bring forth some considerable fruits both in the one and the other of them. For Mr. Nelson did very much encourage Mr. Kettlewell to proceed in that soft and gentle manner wherein he excelled, of managing the matter in controversy. And on the other hand, Mr. Kettlewell was, to the utmost of his power, serviceable to Mr. Nelson, in whatever he could propose to him; but more particularly in stirring him up to exert himself generously for God, and to write for the honour of religion; which he thought might do much more good, as coming from a lay-gentleman, than it would from a professed clergyman. And it is, indeed, to Mr. Kettlewell that we chiefly owe his first setting about his ‘Companion for the Feasts and Fasts of the Church,’ as I remember to have heard from his own mouth, as also the putting it into that method wherein it is. And in the manner of publishing it he told me that he followed Mr. Kettlewell’s directions altogether, whose wisdom herein he much commended. And were it for nothing else than what this learned and religious gentleman did in the service of the Church, and for the public acts and methods of charity which he recommended to him, Kettlewell’s memory ought to be ever precious to the Church of England for the sake of Nelson, had he even not left so much as one page of his own writing to be known by.” *

Among the plans of charity on which the two friends took counsel together was a proposed bequest of Kettlewell’s for the poor of his native place. Having no children of his own, he was desirous of disposing for charitable purposes of a small freehold there, which he had inherited

* “Life of Kettlewell,” pp. 435, 6.

from his father, and yet scrupled to bequeath it away from his brother Robert, without the sanction and approval of his friend. Nelson satisfied himself that competent provision was made for putting out in life the children, both of that brother and of a sister who was but in poor circumstances, and he then cheerfully advised with Kettlewell upon the best method of carrying out his charitable design.

“And I believe,” he says, “there never was a settlement of that kind made with greater piety and prudence; and ’tis possible the world may see the whole at length, since it may serve to direct those whose hearts God shall touch with such charitable dispositions.”*

This last expression will justify the introduction here of an account of the Charity and its founder, given by Nelson in a letter to Archbishop Sharp, who had asked him to communicate the particulars to Thoresby, the Yorkshire antiquary, then engaged in making collections for the history of his county.

“MY LORD,—I am very much obliged to your Grace for the knowledge you have given me of Mr. Thoresby. I was acquainted with his character as an eminent virtuoso, but did not know that he excelled so much in piety and virtue, the much more valuable qualities. To satisfy that worthy gentleman in his inquiries relating to the Rev. Mr. John Kettlewell, I take the liberty to acquaint your Grace, that he was born at Brompton, a village in the parish of Northallerton, in the North Riding of Yorkshire, the 10th of March, 1653. He was instructed in the rudiments of learning at the Free School of Northallerton, which had then been long in repute, on account of the master, Mr. Thos. Smelt, esteemed in his time an excellent grammarian for Latin and Greek. Dr. William Palliser, Archbishop of Cashel, in Ireland, Dean Hickey,

* Preface to *Five Discourses* by John Kettlewell, p. xv.

and the physician Dr. Radcliffe, were all taught by the same master. In 1670, Mr. Kettlewell was placed at St. Edmund's Hall in Oxford, and in 1675, removed to Lincoln College, where he was chose a Fellow the said year. He was presented to Coleshill living in Warwickshire, by Simon Lord Digby, in 1682, of which he was afterwards deprived for not taking the Oaths of Allegiance to King William and Queen Mary. He died at London, the 12th April, 1695, and in his lifetime made a settlement of a farm known by the name of Low Fields, in Brompton, rent 25*l.* a-year, for Charitable uses to the poor of Northallerton and Brompton, which are reduced to six heads.

"First, the trustees are required, as often as need shall be, to lay out yearly two pounds ten shillings, to buy Bibles, Common Prayer Books, and the Whole Duty of Man, or some brief explication of the Creed, or such little practical books, as the minister for the time being shall think most convenient, the poorest families first to be provided, before any distribution shall be made to particular persons.

"Secondly, they shall employ five pounds yearly in physic, and in things necessary to recover health, if the poor shall want it.

"Thirdly, they shall employ five pounds yearly for cloaks for poor widows, or other poor housekeepers as are in want and have been industrious and faithful, when able to work, and have constantly frequented the Church, and are of sober and peaceable demeanour among their neighbours, not given to go about as evil-speakers, or busybodies in other people's matters, nor to pilfering, scolding, drunkenness or other misbehaviour.

"Fourthly, they are to employ one pound yearly for instructing poor girls and boys and to fit them to be servants.

"They are to employ six pounds yearly for apprenticing one boy, the son of some poor person inhabiting the same town. He ought to be fatherless or motherless, or both, one that can say the whole Church Catechism without book, that can read and cast accounts, who has behaved himself reverently in Church, dutifully to his parents,

respectfully to his superiors and is not given to swearing, lying, or obscene language, but by his good behaviour doth give just hopes of his future good conversation.

"Sixthly, the trustees have further a power to apply part of the rent towards the educating any very promising youth of these towns at the University for four years, provided his friends are not able to support him; upon condition he demean himself there piously, soberly and studiously, whereof they shall require a certificate from the tutor once a year; and if by sufficient testimony it appears that he spends his time unprofitably or fall into ill courses, his allowance shall be withdrawn.

"In the settlement there are admirable directions for the management of this Charity; and it concludes with exhortations to the careful management of charities, as a good instance of charity itself.

"If I can be any way further serviceable to gratify the curiosity of Mr. Thoresby, your Grace may command me with all imaginable freedom, being with very great respect, my Lord, your Grace's

"Most obedient humble servant,

"ROBERT NELSON.*"

"Ormond Street,
"4th Sept. 1708."

Another charitable design in which Nelson and Kettlewell were associated, was a scheme for the relief of the extreme want to which many of the deprived clergy with their wives and families, were now reduced. Kettlewell drew up a plan for the collection and distribution of the fund, and Nelson forwarded it, three months before the death of his friend, to Bishop Lloyd and his brethren; who, in pursuance of it, united in that formal appeal to the charity of the public, for which they were summoned to give

* Miscellaneous Papers of Dr. Birch, Brit. Mus. 4297. This letter has been headed by the Copyist, "From Robert Nelson to Archbishop *Tenison*." But a reference to Thoresby's Correspondence, iv. 110, will show that it was addressed to Archbishop Sharp of York.

account before the Privy Council, as for an attempted exercise of that episcopal authority of which they had been deprived by law.

Before the Bishops had issued their letter, one of its projectors had departed to the world where charity has its perfect work. The friendship of Kettlewell and Nelson proved but of brief duration, and little more than three years after their first acquaintance, it was terminated by the decease of the former, April 6, 1695. He was confined to his house in London for six months before his death, and Nelson, who now resided at Blackheath, had many opportunities of conversing with his dying friend and noting his Christian resignation and preparedness for his end. "I visited him,"* writes Nelson to their common friend, Dean Hickes, when the latter was collecting materials for a Biography of 'Colehill's Saint :'

"I visited him very often, because I found it grateful to him; not but that I was very desirous of it too, being sensible how short a time I was like to enjoy so advantageous a conversation. However, out of respect I should have forbore, if he had not suffered me with a great deal of willingness.

"He had an entire trust and confidence in God, and would often say that God was able if he thought fit to restore him to his health again notwithstanding his great weakness, and that his medicines seemed to give him no encouragement, but that according to appearances his distemper was likely to end in his death. But as to the issues of life and death he referred it wholly to God, who knew what was best for him. He appeared to me neither desirous of life, nor afraid of dying, but wholly resigned his will to the will of God; and notwithstanding the well-grounded and comfortable hopes he had of a blessed immortality, he never wished to have

* "Life of Kettlewell," pp. 448, et seqq.

his pains shortened, nor the time of dissolution hastened, but was entirely resigned to what Providence should determine.

“I was once enquiring into some particulars of his past life, with a design of getting materials towards the assistance of such as should undertake to write it. He apprehending what I drove at, said to me, ‘Mr. Nelson, it matters not that the world should be acquainted with the particulars of my life, they will be all laid open at the Day of Judgment, and then ’twill be time enough to have them known.’

“He carried himself with great decency to those that attended him; his wife never did the least thing for him but he returned her thanks, as he did likewise upon several occasions to his servant that was always about him; which was a great mastery in such a languishing distemper, to overcome that peevishness which too ordinarily attends it.

“I never found him in a murmuring complaining temper, but when he was worst he would always find out some favourable circumstances for which he would thank God; if he had not slept, he would thank God he had lain quiet and had not been restless; if he had coughed much he would thank God he had had refreshing sleeps between his fits of coughing. He would always make the best of what he suffered, and was thankful that it was not worse, so far from being discontented that ’twas so bad. He gave as little trouble as he could, and would suffer no body to watch with him, till a night or two before he died.

“I found him once very much concerned about the debates then on foot concerning the doctrine of the blessed Trinity; he was extremely scandalized at the manner of managing that profound mystery; ‘What,’ says he, ‘shall they make this article of our faith, this profound mystery of our religion of which a Christian should never speak or think without the greatest awe and veneration imaginable, a topick to vent their wit and scurrility upon, an occasion to expose one another, and gratify the enemies of our common Christianity!’

“He was not less scandalized with the funeral sermons that were stuffed with such fulsome panegyrics; it grieved him to the soul to see flattery take sanctuary in the pulpit, when religion banishes it from common conversation.

“He preserved a great charity for those that differed from him; he would often say he did not care to speak of peoples persons, and though he would freely condemn such and such practices, he was more reserved in censuring those that did them. He knew a great deal of good of many men whose conduct he was not satisfied with upon this revolution.

“He blamed mightily the indifferency with which several of the swearing clergy treated the matters that were in controversy between them and us. Having heard that several of them had never read the most considerable books writ on our side; upon this subject he once broke out into this prayer. ‘Let not their errors separate between them and God’s favour, give them, O Lord, teachable minds, desirous to see the truth and willing to embrace it.’ He looked on them, as he said, ‘with the bowells of a brother, not with the insults and triumphs of an enemy.’

“He approved not of that bitterness and heat of temper which he met with in some of his deprived brethren; for sufferings being apt of their own nature to sharpen mens minds, he thought men ought to be particularly on the guard against it, as the peculiar temptation that attended their circumstances; and would often say, that a Christian demeanour under sufferings was as necessary as a good cause to render them acceptable to God.

* * * *

“On Thursday morning the eleventh of April ’95, he apprehended himself departing, and said to Mr. Bell the minister that attended him; ‘I am now entring upon my last labour, the Lord gave and he is now taking away; and for that he is now taking away, blessed be the name of the Lord. For I thank my God, I am going without any distrust, without the least misgiving, to a place of rest, joy and everlasting bliss. There is no life like a happy death; I have endeavour’d even from my youth to

approve myself as a faithful servant to my great Master ; I have taken some pains in writing several books, I have seriously considered them, and am fully satisfied (looking on those about him) that you may find in them the way to Heaven ; the Christian duties contained therein have been my practice as well as study, and now I find the advantage of it. Therefore, be all of you carefull to read them often, and seriously, and live suitably thereunto, that when you come to the condition I am now in, you may dye with comfort as you see me do : I have some little pain indeed, but my pain is nothing so extraordinary as my hopes ; for I have earnestly repented of all my sins, and verily believe that through the tender mercies of my God, and merits of my blessed Saviour Jesus Christ, I shall be carried up into Abraham's bosom.' After which he made this short prayer : 'I wait, O God, for that everlasting rest which I want at present, but shall not long : I am ready when thou my God callest for me, yet can stay with patience till thou pleasest, for thy time is the best time, and thy pleasure the best pleasure.'

"After some of the prayers of church, and the commendatory one which he particularly desired, he gave a nephew of his, one John Davil, who was about fifteen years old, and of whose education he had taken the charge and care, some advice in several particulars ; as, 1. To observe all the commandments of God, for he that breaks one is guilty of the breach of all, for the wrath of God is revealed against all ungodliness, &c. 2. To despise and condemn the world, that is, let not the profits nor pleasures of it allure or tempt you ; nor let fear of danger affright you from any Christian duty, but have a perfect dependance upon God, for he is a kind, merciful and a good God, I have found him to be so. 3. To be humble, mild and meek, to have candour and charity, &c. Then he exhorted him from all vice, as from pride, passion, and dissimulation, hypocrisy, lying. Of which last he said, do not tell a lye, no not to save a world, not to save your king, nor your self. Next he gave his sister some directions of the like nature, how to teach and instruct her children. His brother coming in, he told him wherein he had given

him offence, forgave him heartily and prayed for him and his; then he said, 'Brother, have I done you any wrong, tell me, for if I have, I am ready and willing to make compensation,' being answered 'No,' he put the same question to several others present, for, said he, 'I am now going to offer my gift upon the altar, therefore if my brother has ought against me, I must first be reconciled to my brother and then offer my gift.'

"The afternoon before he died he was pleased to acknowledge my friendship towards him; but said his wife had no reason to expect the same to her. I knew his concern for her, and gave him all the assurances of treating her as the relict of one whom I greatly esteemed, and dearly loved. Some little time after this he turned to me as I sat by his bedside, and in a voice which I could hardly hear, said, 'Mr. Nelson, 'tis brave to go to a place where one can enjoy a friend, without fear of losing him; where every thing is agreeable, because neither sin nor sorrow enter; where there needs no sun to shine, for as much as God is the light of that place, and every saint is a star, each ones bliss is felt by every blessed inhabitant, and happiness is dispensed by a blessed circulation.' He added something more about the New Jerusalem, and the heavenly state, which I lost by the lowness of his voice, and his difficulty in speaking. The same afternoon he desired his wife to read to him out of his book of Death, which she did at two several times; at which he was extraordinary devout, and very thankful to her, according to his usual custom, for her assistance. After this he called her to him, and said, 'Child, trust God with thy self; I trust him with thee freely. God's providence is the best protection: and there is no such way to engage his good providence as by trusting Him.' Some time the same afternoon she asked him how he did; he answered her, 'Very praise-worthy well, I thank God, for one near departing.' The prayers in the last agonies were read to him, at his desire, out of that book which was made the companion of his sickness, and which was the last effort of his charity for the salvation of his brethren. He sunk all of a sudden; for being raised to

take some chocolate for his re-freshment, he died in a moment in that posture."

Kettlewell was buried at Allhallows Barking, where the body of Archbishop Laud had been interred, and of which Hickes had been one time rector. His wife was made sole executrix of his will, but she was directed to dispose of his books and MSS. with the approbation and by the advice of his good friend Mr. Nelson; and the latter accordingly acted as literary executor to his friend.* In this capacity he first published a volume of "Five Discourses," which had been left by Kettlewell ready for the press; himself prefixing a preface, in which he sketched the character of the author, and announced a forthcoming memoir "by a very skilful and masterly hand," (apparently Dr. Hickes), "who will set this pattern of Christianity in its true light, and convey him down to posterity in his full proportion." Nelson forwarded the volume upon its publication to Bishop Ken, and received the following acknowledgment in return.†

"SIR.—I received the book, which I imagined came from you, and for which I return you many thanks; and since that your obliging letter came to my hands. You have done an honour to the memory of my dead friend, which we all ought to acknowledge; and I am very glad that his life is writing by another hand, as you tell me. He was certainly as saint-like a man as ever I knew; and his books are demonstrations of it, which are as full of as solid and searching a piety as ever I read. God was pleased to take him from the evil to come to his own infinite advantage, but to our great loss. His blessed will be done! Since the date of your letter a new scene has been

* Nelson has been incorrectly said to have been appointed Executor.

† "Kettlewell's Life," Appendix, No. 25.—Superfcribed, "For his worthy friend Mr. Nelson, at his house on Blackheath;" and endorsed by Nelson, "Bishop Kenn's testimony about Mr. Kettlewell."

opened ; and if the Act passes which is now upon the anvil, I presume the prisons will be filled with the malcontents ; and your friend, though innocent and inoffensive, yet apprehends he may share in the calamity ; and, foreseeing it, it will be no surprize to him. In respect of that sort of men, I have always been of the mind of the Prophet, that their strength is to sit still. And so it will be found at the long run. And 'tis the wisest and most dutiful way, to follow rather than to anticipate Providence, &c. I commend you all to God's most gracious protection.

“ Good Sir,

“ Your very affectionate servant,

“ [THOS. B. & W.] ”

“ March 2, 1694. ”

In the following year Nelson published an “ Office for Prisoners ” which Kettlewell had also finished for the press ; and from which we learn that attention was even then being directed to the moral atmosphere of our gaols, and that charitable and compassionate persons were found to visit the inmates, and put religious books into their hands. In 1704, another unpublished MS. of Kettlewell's came into Nelson's hands ; viz., a letter upon Profuseness of expenditure, which he had addressed by way of expostulation to a gentleman of his acquaintance, in 1681, and which Nelson considered calculated to do service among the higher classes, by impressing upon them the responsibility of wealth. And in 1712 he edited a third edition of Kettlewell's “ Practical Believer,” with a preface, and some additions that Kettlewell had prepared, concerning the proportion between sin and punishment, and upon the eternity of hell torments, in animadversion of Tillotson's heterodox discourse on those points. He had also thought at one time of preparing a memoir of Kettlewell, and when neither he nor Hickes had found leisure to do that justice

to the memory of their friend, he entrusted the materials that he had collected (but a few days before his last sickness) to his friend Dr. Francis Lee, who at last accomplished the long-delayed task, and sent his "Memoirs of the Life of Kettlewell" to the press in 1718.

Nelson's friendship with Kettlewell introduced him to the acquaintance of Hickes, who soon succeeded to the place in his affections which had been held by Tillotson and Kettlewell. Nelson was one of those affectionate natures who must always have a friend, and his personal esteem for Hickes was deepened by the highest respect for his varied learning, and by deference for his theological judgment. Upon leaving Blackheath, he became Hickes's near neighbour in Ormond Street, and continued in almost daily intercourse with him for the last eleven years of his life. Some mention of "my neighbour the Dean" is rarely omitted from his more familiar letters. In his "Life of Bull," he speaks of him as;—

"My very learned and worthy friend, that great master of ecclesiastical antiquity, and the most considerable reviver of primitive theology that hath appeared in our times. Tho' he is admirably skilled in other parts of useful learning, yet he hath laboured with great success in untrodden paths, a certain mark of a great genius, whereby the utmost parts of Europe will have an occasion to celebrate his profound erudition. But he excelleth in his own profession, having built his study of divinity upon the Holy Scriptures, and the primitive fathers of the church as the best expositors of those sacred writings; and hath thereby created such a regard to antiquity in the generation of young divines that are now rising among us, that we may hope to see the next age preserved from the infection of those latitudinarian principles which have so much prevailed in this. His readiness to communicate his knowledge, draweth an application to him from men of the greatest figure for their talents, and renders his friendship a true

and valuable blessing. But above all, the solid and substantial piety of his conduct maketh his example a constant instruction to those who live within the reach of it.*

The deprived Dean, on his part, lost no opportunity of publicly commending the publications of Robert Nelson, and of boasting of his acquaintance with one, who was the object of universal admiration and esteem, and whose character could not but reflect the greatest honour upon the nonjuring communion, to which he had attached himself. Hickes's "First Collection of Letters† with a Popish Priest" was dedicated to Nelson "as a matter of necessity," he says, rather than of choice;

"For you know the gentleman, who drew me against my inclination into this controversy: I acquainted you time after time with the steps of my proceeding in it with him, and his sister; and I desired, had I come to oral conference with their guide, to have you sole witness on my side to what had passed between us in all our arguments. And for these reasons I think myself obliged to make you a publick present of these papers of controversy, with that deference which is due to so discerning and learned a judge, with all the respect that ought to be paid to so great an ornament of our church and religion, and with all the acknowledgments I ought to make for the honour of your friendship, which I esteem as one of the providential blessings of my life, that God has been pleased to reserve to me as a comfort in the last and most tiresome part thereof.

"In all the conversation I have had with you I can truly say, I have found you fully answer the great and good character that my learned and religious friend of venerable memory, Mr. Kettlewell, gave me of you, many years before it was my happiness to be acquainted with you. The love and esteem he had for you was to my knowledge exceeding

* "Life of Bull," pp. 514, 5.

† "Several Letters which passed between Dr. George Hickes and a Popish Priest upon occasion of a young gentlewoman's departing from the Church of England to that of Rome." 1705.

great while he lived, and at his death he gave you a sure testimony of his constancy in the honourable opinion he had of you in committing his worldly concerns to your wisdom and trust. Sir, I cannot pretend to merit your friendship to such a degree as that worthy person deserved it, who was one of the best of Christians and divines; but I dare pretend to the same degree of affection and respect, which he had for you to his last breath, and in testimony thereof I humbly offer this book to your acceptance, professing myself ambitious of being reckoned and continued in the number of your most faithful friends and servants."

In another preface,* Hickes gives a list of "very many learned gentlemen of the laity, true sons of the Church of England, who, with invincible strength of reason, and great variety of learning, have defended their mother in her doctrine, worship, polity, discipline, priesthood, and revenues, against her open and secret enemies of all sorts and sects;" and closes it with the name of "that worthy gentleman, Mr. Nelson, in his 'Companion to the Festivals and Fasts of the Church.'"

"His great worth and talent are known everywhere by that most excellent book, which is received with the highest commendation in all places. For besides the acceptance it hath in a short time found at home in so many editions, it is now translating abroad into several foreign languages, for the benefit of the public where those languages are spoken. To this book I must add that of 'the Great Duty of frequenting the Christian Sacrifice,' to which is prefixed an Exercise upon Confirmation, and the 'Life of Dr. George Bull, late lord bishop of St. David's.'" †

In another work,‡ when Hickes is animadverting himself

* "Three Short Treatises, &c., now again published by Dr. George Hickes, in defence of the Priesthood and true rights of the Church." 1709.

† "Several Letters which passed," &c., 2nd edit. 1715. Preface, p. 10.

‡ "An Apologetical Vindication of the Church of England," by George Hickes, D.D. 2nd ed. 1706. Preface.

on Mr. Stephens' pamphlet on Church Communion, he calls attention to the reply of his friend, as "a very solid, learned, and plain short answer to it, of which I think myself obliged to take notice, because it is an antidote against all the poison of his book." He answers Tindal's appeal to the laity, to support him in his attacks on the Christian priesthood, by instancing* Robert Nelson as "another gentleman of the laity, who is the reverse to him in his writings about the church and priesthood, even as much reverse to him, I had almost said, as good itself is to evil, or a good to an evil angel." He indignantly rebuts Dr. Hancock's reflection† on "one of the most eminent and venerable gentlemen of his time, and most eminent writer of devotions, whose books have been received in so many editions, for which he hath had the thanks and prayers of the generality of the clergy and laity, I mean Mr. Nelson, against whom he directs these words in the Preface of his Answer: 'But to bring these notices into books of devotion, as a certain ingenious gentleman hath lately done, is a still greater sign of their zeal in this matter.'" He goes on to complain‡ that the doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice had disappeared from the writings, even of divines, who have treated on the subject, and "this was perhaps the pious reason why Mr. Nelson endeavoured to retrieve this primitive word and notion, by bringing the one into the title-page, and the other into the devotions of his book. For he that knew *Id verum quod prius*, might think he could not more honour God, or better serve his church, or more benefit his readers in writing on that subject, than by

* "Two Treatises on the Christian Priesthood, and on the Dignity of the Episcopal Order, with a prefatory discourse in answer to a book entitled the 'Rights of the Christian Church.'" 1847. vol. i. p. 313.

† "A Second Collection of Controversial Letters relating to the Church of England and the Church of Rome, as they passed between an honourable lady and Dr. George Hickes, &c." 1710. Preface.

‡ Ibid, p. 57.

restoring the sacrifice to the sacrament, which had kept possession in the churches of God for 1500 years, and was a notion so proper to explain the special nature of that mystery, as also to inflame the devotion of the faithful, and encrease their veneration for the sacrament and the whole ministration thereof." In another place Hickes assures * Bishop Trimnel of Norwich, who had been branding it in his Charge (1710) as a High-Church error, "that there are very many more of the best authority and reputation, both among the clergy and laity too, besides Mr. Nelson, who believe this doctrine." And he indignantly remonstrates† with the author of an anonymous pamphlet (supposed to be White Kennett) for taunting Nelson with his Jacobitism, and for ascribing to the secret partiality of Nonjurors the encomiums which were heaped upon his book. "Could he so insidiously reflect upon Mr. Sharp,‡ for so often citing and commending Mr. Nelson's book, as to suggest he did it because he admired him upon another account? Certainly, Mr. Sharp had all the reason imaginable to mention that gentleman and his book with all respect, and to praise him (were there no other reasons) for the sake of his excellent performance in it, which hath already been so well received in five several editions, and will have many more. But Dr. Kennet is no stranger to the singular worth of that gentleman, who spends his time and estate in promoting the temporal and spiritual happiness of men, and is a member of the same society with himself for propagating Christian knowledge; and therefore it is not credible he could be so mean and so malicious as to insult him on that other account."§ Not even the conformity of Nelson to the

* "Two Treatises, &c.," vol. i. p. 4.

† "A Second Collection of Controversial Letters." Preface, p. 68.

A High-Church clergyman at Stepney.

Kennett faintly denies the authorship of the Tract, and complains in

"He accuses me of being so mean and malicious as to insult Mr.

established church in 1709, seems to have impaired the intimacy of his friendship with the leader of the Nonjurors; and their mutual personal attachment, together with the coincidence of their political predilections and their theological opinions, seems to have kept them united in the closest friendship till the death of Nelson but one year before his friend.

Another nonjuring acquaintance of Nelson, and also his neighbour in Ormond Street, was Mr. Thomas Bowdler, at the death of whose wife in 1713, we find Nelson acting as pall-bearer in company with the Earl of Winchelsea, Captain Hatton, and Sir Anthony Deane, his friend Spinckes reading the service at her grave.*

Through Hickes or Bowdler, Nelson may have gained the acquaintance of the well-known Samuel Pepys, who had been the trusted agent of James II. at the Admiralty, and who still continued the secret partisan of the exiled monarch; who was now in his old age endeavouring to repent of the worldly vicious life, which in his Diary he has so unblushingly portrayed, and who begged Nelson's advice in the selection of a spiritual guide from the ranks of the nonjuring clergy. His request brought him the following reply:—†

“Blackheath, March 2, 1702-3.

“SIR,—I have not been unmindful of your commands, neither can I ever neglect what is enjoined me by so worthy a friend, but it required some time to receive

Nelson; when I presume that worthy gentleman will acquit me of any intention of that kind. He is again mistaken in a matter of fact of no importance, but only to show his little regard for truth. He says I am a member of the same Society with Mr. Nelson for Propagating Christian Knowledge. I should not be ashamed of being so, but there are some reasons why I am not so, and why I have not been so for several years, as the late Secretary, Mr. Wanley, will testify.” MSS. Collection, Brit. Mus. vol. xvi., p. 310.

* “Life of John Bowdler, Esqr.” 1825. p. 13.

† “Diary and Correspondence of Samuel Pepys.” 3rd edition. 1849. vol. v. p. 421.

such an account of that matter as I might depend upon. After the strictest enquiry, I find none of our clergy placed in your neighbourhood nearer than Mitcham, where lives one Mr. Higden, a very ingenious person, who married the late Lord Stowell's sister, but I believe you may have one with greater ease from London, by reason of the conveniency of public conveyances. Our friend Dean Hickey is at present at Oxford; but if you will be pleased whenever your occasions require it, to send to Mr. Spinckes, who has the honour of being known to you, he will be sure to wait upon you and take such measures that you may always be supplied, whenever you stand in need of such assistance. He lodges at a glazier's in Winchester Street, near London Wall.

"You will pardon me, Sir, if I take this occasion to acquaint you with a pious work, which is now carrying on by the joint assistance of our nobility and gentry, as well as of the bishop and clergy. The States of Holland have consented that the Church of England worship should be established at Rotterdam; and that it may be performed with due solemnity, there is a design encouraged of building a Church in that place, which by estimate, will cost 3500*l.*; 1000*l.* of that sum must be borrowed to lay the foundation: it will be no surprise to you who are acquainted with that situation. The general officers have contributed beyond expectation, (military men having very seldom any great zeal in such matters), a great number of the nobility and gentry having taken this occasion to show their zeal for the Church. The Duke of Marlborough has given it his particular countenance, and the expectation of 500*l.* from the Queen. I need not forbear laying this matter before you, whom God has blessed with such a plentiful fortune, which you know how to dispose of to the best advantage, and such as will turn you to good account at the great day; and withall I beg that Mr. Hewer may be acquainted with this pious design, which will contribute so much to God's glory and the honor of the Church. I do most heartily wish you health and ease; but if the Providence of God thinks fit to try you with the want of both, that you may find the comfort of Religion under all

your afflictions, and may make his will your choice and satisfaction.

“I am, with great respect,
“Your most faithful, humble servant,
“R. NELSON.”

With the Rev. Nathaniel Spinckes, whom he mentions in the above letter, Nelson had probably been brought into contact at the bed-side of Kettlewell. To him was committed the management of the fund, which was raised by the deprived Bishops, at the proposition of Nelson and Kettlewell, for relieving the necessities of their clergy. And in Nelson's will he is entrusted with a sum of money for their wants. With the more celebrated Collier, Nelson is shown to have been on terms of intimacy, by a minute of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, on the 25th September, 1712, when he reports:—

“That he had according to the desire of the Society endeavoured to engage Mr. Collier to prepare a Treatise on the Abuse of Music; but that he was informed Mr. Collier was at present so taken up in finishing his ‘Ecclesiastical History,’ that he was obliged by his booksellers not to undertake any other work till that was finished.”

The first volume of this remarkable work had appeared in 1708, and he was still engaged upon the second, which did not make its appearance till 1714. In each volume we find the name of “Robert Nelson, Esq., Ormond Street,” as a subscriber.

In the same rank for piety and learning with Spinckes and Collier, must be placed the less known name of Francis Lee, M.D.,* who lost his Fellowship at St. John's, Oxford,

* See *Ἀπολειπόμενα*, or Dissertations, Theological, Mathematical, and Physical; with a critical commentary on the most difficult passages of the

at the Revolution, and going abroad, practised physic at Venice for two years, with much success. Upon his return in 1694, he joined a Society of Mystics, and married the daughter of Mrs. Lead, the prophetess of the sect, residing with his mother-in-law at Hoxton. This woman claimed the distinction of conversing with God and good spirits, and pretended a Divine revelation in favour (among other points) of the finite character of hell torments. Dodwell in vain endeavoured to recover his friend from the delusion in a correspondence which extended over several years. But Lee, at length convinced of his error, abandoned his associates and attacked their principles in his "*History of Montanism*," which appeared with a Preface by Hickes, in 1709. He had for some years before enjoyed the friendship of Nelson, and to him, as well as to Kettlewell and Brokesby, has been ascribed a share in Nelson's palmary work on the Festivals and Fasts of the Church.

"The greater part," writes his biographer, "of Mr. Nelson's Feasts and Fasts, I found in his own hand after his decease. He was the first that put Mr. Hoare and Mr. Nelson upon the founding of Charity Schools, upon the same plan as that of Halle in Germany, and was continually encouraging and promoting all manner of charities, both public and private. But his chief aim was for healing the breaches, and for the reunion of all the divided branches among those that call themselves Christians, according to the apostolical rule and standard of the primitive church, before any innovations were crept into either the Eastern or Western Churches."

Book of Genesis, wherein the divine authority of Moses is vindicated against the objections of all Sceptics, Deists, and other infidels. To which are prefixed a short account of the Author, proposals given to Peter the Great, Czar of Muscovy, for the right framing of his government, and a second edition of the Dissertation upon the second Apochryphal Book of Esdras. By the late pious and learned Francis Lee, M.D., in 2 volumes. 1752.

See also Mr. C. Walton's valuable and interesting "*Notes and Materials for an adequate Biography of William Law*." Printed for private circulation, 1854. And Wilson's "*History of Merchant Taylors' School*," p. 955.

He was called Rabbi Lee, on account of his great learning. He was treated with much consideration by Harley, when Lord High Treasurer, and was allowed to tender to him schemes for the improvement of the American Colonies, and the regulation of our gaols; he had plans for taking care of all vagrant and destitute persons as in Holland, and for supplying the necessities of those who from the past respectability of their position, are ashamed to let their wants be known. To Lee, as it has been said, Nelson and Hickes entrusted the materials they had collected for the Life of Kettlewell. He was much with Nelson during the few last months of his life, attended his dying bed, and received a legacy of 50*l.* in his will.

In addition to the Jacobite circle in which Nelson moved in London, he had also an intimate acquaintance with a little body of nonjuring friends, who were settled at Shottisbrooke, in Berkshire.

At their head was Francis Cherry, Esq., of Shottisbrooke House,* a country gentleman of family and landed estate, whose worth and hospitality, combined with genteel accomplishments, and a handsome person, procured him the same popularity in his county, which Nelson enjoyed in the circles of town life, and rendered him, Nonjuror as he was, "the idol of Berkshire." His house, in which he was able to make up seventy beds for the officers and soldiery who were quartered upon him at the Revolution, was always open to the deprived clergy, and became a complete hotel for friendship, learning and distress. Bishop Ken divided his time between Longleat and Shottisbrooke House. Bowdler and his family were frequent guests; and Nelson would frequently ride over from Lord Berkeley's at Cranford. Dr. Grabe always found a welcome there. Charles Leslie, disguised in regimentals, was

* See Preface to Monck Berkeley's Poems, 1797; pp. 418, &c.

concealed by Mr. Cherry for six months, at a house belonging to him in the neighbourhood, at White Waltham; and it was at Cherry's request and expense that he repaired to Bar-le-duc, to attempt the conversion of the Pretender. His devotion to the Jacobite cause was displayed upon one occasion in a somewhat singular manner. Among the accomplishments on which he prided himself as a country gentleman was his superior horsemanship, the display of which in the hunting-field would sometimes pique the emulation of King William. And Mr. Cherry, observing one day, that he was closely pressed by the King, risked his life, for the chance of breaking the usurper's neck, and plunged into a frightfully deep and broad part of the Thames, in hope that William might be induced to follow. To the Princess Anne upon a hunting-day he would always pay the most particular attention, riding up to her calash; but when she assumed her father's crown, the queen missed Mr. Cherry from her side, and pointed him out in the distance to her attendants: "There goes one of the honestest gentlemen in my dominions."

Among the friends whom Nelson met at Mr. Cherry's was the Rev. Francis Brookesby,* who had been deprived of his living of Rowley, near Hull, in 1691, after having held it for twenty years; and who, after several removals from place to place, found a final resting-place in the house of Mr. Cherry, who entertained him as his chaplain. Here he became acquainted with Dodwell and Nelson. He also is said to have assisted Nelson in the composition of Festivals and Fasts to such an extent, that his own family attributed to him the real authorship of the book. He took an eager interest in Nelson's religious and charitable undertakings, and addressed† to him in 1708, a letter

* See Nicholl's "*Leicestershire*," vol. iv. pt. 2, p. 737, &c.

† "Some Proposals toward promoting the Propagation of the Gospel in our

upon the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts, the account of the designs and operations of that Society having just come into his hands. "Silver and gold have I none," exclaimed the deprived Nonjuror, "to put into your treasury; and I find I have nothing else beside my prayers to contribute hereunto, but employing my thoughts about it." But Brokesby's name is better known by his account* of the Life and Writings of his friend Dodwell, which he dedicated to Robert Nelson, "in grateful acknowledgment," he says, "of your favours, and to tell the world I am one of those whom your extensive benevolence has reached."

Henry Dodwell was the most distinguished, in point of learning, of the nonjuring residents at Shottisbrooke, and exercised the greatest influence upon Nelson's life. He had been deprived at the Revolution of the Camdenian Professorship of History at Oxford, and he continued till his death a conscientious adherent of the exiled family. But he did not consider that such political differences formed a sufficient ground for continued ecclesiastical separation. He had adhered to the communion of the deprived bishops, as his rightful spiritual fathers; but he was not prepared to see the schism perpetuated after their death, by the consecration of nonjuring bishops in their room. Accordingly, upon the decease of Bishop Lloyd, in 1709, he wrote to Bishop Ken, the only survivor of the deprived prelates, to inquire whether he claimed his adherence; and Bishop

American Plantations. Humbly offered in a letter to Mr. Nelson, a worthy member of the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts. To which is added a Postscript. 1708." [Anon.] The author urges the immediate appointment of Colonial Bishops, the French (he says) having one already at Quebec; he suggests that the Bishop of London might be Archbishop, with jurisdiction over them, and the Archbishop of Canterbury be entitled a Patriarch.

* "The Life of Mr. Henry Dodwell, with an Account of his Works, by Francis Brokesby, B.D. To which is added a letter to Robert Nelson, Esq., from Dr. Edmund Halley, containing an abstract of Mr. Dodwell's book *De Cyclis*. 1715."

Ken, in reply, not insisting upon his rights, the Shottisbrooke Nonjurors returned to their parish church, the bells ringing merrily in honour of the event. The following account of this step, and of his reasons for it, is given by Dodwell himself in two letters to a friend :*

“ Shottisbrook, Jan. 11, 1707-8.

“ WORTHY SIR,—I have received your’s, and have already written to my lord of Bath and Wells, as the only survivor of the invalidly deprived bishops, and as thereby having it in his power to free not only his private diocese, but the whole National Church from the schism introduced by filling the sees, which were no otherwise empty than by the invalid deprivations. This I take to be sufficient upon our principles, who cannot justify our separate communion on any other account than that of the schism, provided there be no other (whom we do not yet know of) who does claim, and can prove a better title to some one episcopal altar of our national Church, by succession to some of our deceased fathers than the present incumbents. It concerns us all to join our prayers, that our own concord may be broken as little as is possible by our reconciliation into one communion with our adversaries.”

And on March 10, after the receipt of Ken’s reply, he writes:

“ Our two families here were at church on February the 26th, the first Sunday in Lent. But there are several who still scruple the prayers. Endeavours are, however, using that this difference of practice may make as little difference in our flock as may be ; whose endeavours will deserve the prayers of all who desire the good as well as the peace of this afflicted Church. And I hope your father and you will not be wanting in your’s.

“ Your affectionate brother,

“ H. D.”

* “ A Defence of our Constitution in Church and State, or an answer to the late charge of the Nonjurors accusing us of Heresy and Schism, Perjury and Treason, by Nathaniel Marshall, D.D. 1717.” Appendix. No. 3.

Dodwell's conscientious and kindly endeavour to effect the conciliation of the churches was not unattended by something of personal annoyance to himself. Berkshire was then within the diocese of Sarum, and his nonjuring acquaintance failed not to taunt him with the submission he would have to make to the obnoxious occupant of the see. Dodwell, however, did not shrink, in due course, from making Bishop Burnet the tender of his obedience,* begging to be owned as an unworthy member of his flock, and "that you will be pleased at your convenience to admit my elder children to confirmation. I value this ordinance more than the loose latitudinarian opinions of the age would oblige me to do, as taking it for the true baptism of the Spirit, derived from the Apostles. This will make me value the more the favour hereby conferred on my children, if they may receive this office from you, which may entitle them to so great benefits as are the consequents of the inhabitation of the Spirit. In the meantime, I beg another boon of your prayers and the episcopal benediction upon me and mine. I am your fatherhood's unworthy communicant, Henry Dodwell." This was dated from Shottesbrooke, Feb. 10, 1711. The unhappy reflection on the latitudinarian party, which in truth was sufficiently out of place in a letter of submission to one of its leaders, drew

* Four letters which passed between the Lord Bishop of Sarum and Mr. Henry Dodwell. 1713.

ADVERTISEMENT.—The two first of the following letters having got into print, unknown to the Lord Bishop of Sarum, or to Mrs. Dodwell, the worthy widow of the very learned and pious Mr. Henry Dodwell, they were reprinted with the 3rd, which was sent to the Bookseller from that R^t Rev^d and learned prelate. There being several typographical faults, and words left out, which influence the sense of those letters, it was Mrs. Dodwell's desire that they should appear in public with that correctness, which belongeth to them in the originals. To which purpose she was willing to communicate them to me by the hand of my worthy and learned friend Mr. Cherry of Shottesbrooke, with a 4th letter, which the Lord Bishop of Sarum wrote afterwards to Mr. Dodwell, and which concluded the correspondence between them.

9th April, 1713.

ROB. NELSON.

back next day from Burnet an angry and bitter reply, arraigning Dodwell's motives for his change, and not sparing his personal character. He reproaches him for his book against the natural immortality of the soul, as having afforded a handle to unbelief, of which Collins the deist had not failed to lay hold ; he styles him " one of the most self conceited men of the age," says he shall not be in Berkshire to hold a confirmation till midsummer twelvemonth, and gives him liberty to procure the service of some other bishop in the interval. Dodwell had but a year to live, and was weary of controversy and quarrel. He replied in a mild and apologetical letter, and enclosed his book against incense, as sufficient to clear him from the imputation of Romanising tendencies. " Nor will it perhaps be displeasing to acquaint you, that the young gentleman who gave the occasion for it is one who never had any advantage of any other education than what he had in the Isle of Man, the rather because it makes so highly for the commendation of your brother, the bishop of that island, who has much improved them." This soft answer turned away Burnet's wrath, who wrote at last (April 24, 1711) from Clerkenwell a kindly reply, and in return for the tract upon incense begged to " send two of my explications of the Church Catechism to your children. I pray God bless you and them." The two first letters between Dodwell and the bishop, got surreptitiously into print, through the contrivance, apparently, of some one who wished to discourage the Nonjurors from conforming, by the reception that one of their leaders had met with. And Robert Nelson therefore undertook, after his friend's decease, the congenial task of publishing its more kindly conclusion.

Nelson's own views upon this question coincided altogether with Dodwell's, and he acted in concert with him on the occasion ; writing (like him) to Bishop Ken, to know whether he laid claim any longer to his spiritual allegiance.

He gives this account of his proceedings in a letter* to a friend, dated Feb. 21, 1709-10.

"SIR,—In order to satisfy your enquiry I can acquaint you that I have received a letter from Bishop Ken, who assures me 'that he was always against that practice, which he foresaw would perpetuate the schism, and declared against it, and that he had acted accordingly, and would not have it laid at his door, having made a recess (as he says) for a much more worthy person. And he apprehends it was always the judgment of his brethren, that the death of the canonical bishops would render the invaders canonical, in regard the schism is not to last always.'

"Afterwards his lordship adds this, 'I presume Mr. Dodwell and others with him go to church, though I myself do not, being a public person; but to communicate with my successor in that part of the office which is unexceptionable I should make no difficulty.'

"This letter I communicated to Mr. Dodwell, when in town, which he thought clear enough for closing the schism, and I suppose in a short time he may have one for the same purpose. I can give you no account of the progress of the project, having not seen Mr. W—— since Sunday was sevennight, when he was with me, with Mr. Cherry and Mr. Dodwell, but I suppose he is prosecuting his proposals for peace.

"As to *ipso facto* excommunications, I think they are only *sententia lata ab ipso jure*, a sentence passed by the law, which as the canonists say requires *sententiam latam a judice*, another sentence passed by the judge. An *ipso facto* excommunication by any canons, not barring men from communion till there be a declaratory sentence, as Lyndwood notes. Lin. in Constit. Joh. Peccham. This matter is largely treated of by Monsieur du Pin, *De Disciplinâ Ecclesiastica*.

"Your faithful humble servant,

"ROB. NELSON.

"Feb. 21, 1709-10."

* Marshall's "Defence." Appendix. No. 5.

His friend Hickes was lying on a sick bed, when news reached him of Nelson's intended secession. He had procured himself, in 1693, to be consecrated Bishop of Thetford, in virtue of which he claimed, at Bishop Lloyd's death, to be regarded as the head of the nonjuring communion. The secession of Dodwell and his followers was thus a formal repudiation of his pretensions to the episcopacy, and he could not but be deeply mortified to find even his bosom friend abandoning his cause. He sent at once to Nelson, informing him that he was about to draw up a paper on the subject, and desiring him to postpone his secession till it should be prepared. Nelson agreed to defer the step till Easter Day. Hickes's infirmities disabled him from completing his task,* and Nelson accordingly was received into the Established Church at the specified time, by his friend Sharp, Archbishop of York, in the church of St. Mildred's, Poultry. Nelson had for some years enjoyed the acquaintance of the good Archbishop. In 1707, we find him enclosing to the Archbishop his friend Hickes's answer to the "Rights of the Christian Church," and receiving his animadversions upon its argument. They were so intimate, says Sharp's biographer, as to spend many hours together in private conversation; and could not but frequently discuss the reasons which divided them in church communion. And no sooner was Bishop Lloyd deceased, than Sharp renewed his application to Nelson upon the subject. "I fell upon a discourse," he writes in his diary, Friday, Jan. 27, 1701²⁰, "with Mr. Nelson, about his continuing in the schism now after the Bishop of Norwich is dead. He tells me that he is not without doubt, but he will further consider the matter, and when he comes to a resolution, after an enquiry how

* The letter to Nelson was afterwards published in "The Constitution of the Catholic Church, and the nature and consequences of Schism set forth in a collection of Papers written by the late Revd. George Hickes, D.D. 1716."

matters stand, he will persist in it." Nelson was constantly with the Archbishop about this time, being mentioned in his diary as a visitant, Jan. 30, Feb. 5, 17, and 25, March 5 and 18. On February 15th, Sharp received "the good news," as he called it, "of Mr. Nelson's intention to return to our communion;" and on April 9th, being Easter Day, "I preached," he writes, "at St. Mildred's, Poultry, and administered the sacrament, where was present Mr. Nelson, which was the first time he had communicated in the sacrament since the Revolution. I gave the sacrament likewise to Mr. D'Oyley, whom I had reconciled to the Church, he having been educated as a Papist."*.

The motive, it will be remembered, which originally determined Nelson to quit the communion of the Established Church, was his inability conscientiously to join in the prayers for William and Mary, which, by his very presence in church during their use, the worshipper was supposed to sanction. At this period, however, of his life, Nelson seems to have arrived at a different conclusion; and it was the alteration of his views on this point which now enabled him to conform to the Established Church, without affecting any concurrence in these "immoral prayers," as they were termed by the Nonjurors. His reasonings and conclusions on the matter are thus explained in an answer which he sent to the following Query on Church Communion,† and in which he lays down principles capable of a much wider application:—

"*Query.* Whether a man may hold communion with such a Church, and join in all points of public worship with such a Church, as use of unlawful prayers, without guilt or dissimulation?"

* "Life of John Sharp, D.D., Lord Archbishop of York," vol. ii. pp. 28, 31.

† Marshall's "Defence." Appendix No. 9. A True Copy of the late Mr. Nelson's answer to the following Query concerning Church Communion.

“ *Answer.* If by joining in all parts of public worship be meant the actual joining in those prayers that are unlawful, no person can lawfully do it. For he can no more say Amen to what he desires not or detests, than he can say Amen to that which is no Article of his Faith, and which he looks upon as false.

“ But if by joining in public prayers be meant only holding communion with such a Church, I think he lawfully may.

“ 1. I shall consider it in respect to conscience, and then the sense of it may be reduced to this principle by those that hold the negative: that when there is any thing unlawful to be prayed for in the offices of the Church, we are then bound to separate from that Church.

“ This is a proposition by no means to be allowed, and some time ago was so far from being owned by the Church of England, that it was censured as grossly fanatical. But because it now appears under another dress, I shall,

“ Firstly, state the point.

“ Secondly, show my reasons for dissenting from it.

“ In stating the point, some things are to be premised.

“ 1. That the Church spoken of is such a Church as may lawfully be communicated with in all things but this.

“ 2. That it would be a duty to communicate with that Church, were not this obstruction in the way.

“ 3. That this obstruction does not concern the vitals of religion.

“ 4. That this is made no condition or term of communion, nor what is required of any one towards communion, but to the minister, who subscribes, uses the offices, and is presumed to say Amen.

“ These things being premised, I apprehend the aforesaid proposition will not hold true; for we may hold communion with a Church where somewhat is asserted that is false, or prayed for that is unlawful. And it may not be improper to recollect the common reasons of the old Nonconformists against the Brownists as to this particular.

“ 1. That notwithstanding such mistakes in a Church, Christ holds communion with it; and where Christ holds communion, we are obliged to hold it; for it is there as with the soul in the body, which leaves not the body for the headache, or a wound that is not mortal.

“ 2. Then if that were true we should hold no communion with any church in the world, because it is more than probable that no church in its offices is so perfect, as to be without error or mistake in them.

“ If it be said, why do we then forsake the communion of the Church of Rome? I answer :—

“ 1. That that Church is not to be held communion with, though its offices were pure, because of the doctrines and practices of it, which are corrupted in the vitals of them.

“ 2. That the very offices do partake of the corruption, are vitally corrupted, as in respect of the object of worship—saints and images, or of the things prayed for, or the things acknowledged therein.

“ 3. They are so incorporated that there is no communicating without them, the body of their service being made up of them.

“ 4. These are among them made necessary terms of communion; so should any of a contrary opinion hold communion with that Church in fact, as he is *ipso facto* an heretic, and stands excommunicated by their Maundy Thursday Bull, so if discovered he would be prosecuted as such.

“ 5. I make this as a proposal, Whether if a person should go to a confession, and much more to an assembly of theirs and offer to come to mass and receive, provided he may be permitted not to believe Purgatory, &c., he would be allowed and encouraged? And much less would he prevail to have the case so stated and publicly declared.

“ But now this is not only so with us, as to particular casuists, but it is declared upon all occasions, and publicly printed, that this is no term of communion; and that practice so far confirms it that those who do not own the government are admitted to the sacrament, as well as those that do.

“ But granting this, yet is not this dissimulation? I answer, if he doth not dissemble, he is not supposed to dissemble.

“ 1. For it is the constant and avowed principle of the Church of England, that a person may be present at a worship so circumstantiated as before, and join in it when

everything is not approved or believed to be true and good.

“2. It is the declared opinion that this is no condition of communion, and so every one of the communion is not presumed to approve it, or to hold it to be true and good, because he is bound strictly to approve no farther than it is made an article of communion.

“3. There are those who are in communion of the Church of England, who are of another opinion, and are known to be so, and yet allowed to communicate.

“And consequently they that join in the offices of the Church, are not necessarily supposed to join in those particulars. And there is no dissimulation in joining as far as they can, which, it used to be said, all were bound to do.

“As to what is objected in relation to the guilt that is contracted by voluntary hearing a bad thing, the obligation of being present sufficiently discharges one from any guilt of that kind.”

It will be apparent from the above argument that Nelson still adhered to the Jacobite cause, and was unable to join in the public prayers for Queen Anne. He openly professed his intention never to go to church on state prayer days, appointed by royal authority, for “that the intention of those days is a solemn acknowledgment of the pretended right to which he could not assent.” He was in the habit, like other Nonjurors of the time, of expressing his dissent when the royal titles were given her, in the services of the church. His practice here agreed with those of his friends Cherry and Dodwell; the former of whom used to rise from his knees at the name of the Queen, and stand up facing the congregation, while the latter contented his conscience with a less conspicuous protest, and used to slide off his knees and sit down upon his hassock. Other Jacobite worshippers, as Samuel Parker, satisfied themselves and amused their neighbours in church by turning over the leaves of their prayer-books with unnecessary vehemence,

so as to avoid hearing, if possible, the unpalatable words.*

Nelson's conduct in quitting the nonjuring communion received its share of public criticism, and carried weight with his party. Two years before he had attracted notice by the prominent position he held among the London Jacobites, and when, under the apprehension of a French invasion in favour of the Pretender, orders were given to the justices † of peace for Middlesex, to prosecute all Papists and Nonjurors who did not immediately take the abjuration oath, he found it convenient to prolong his absence from town. The imputation that he had quitted town under apprehension, he somewhat testily repudiates in two letters to his old friend Dr. Mapletoft, the tone of which jars with his ordinary gentleness of expression. ‡

“REVEREND SIR,—I was yesterday told that you were pleased to say in a public coffee-house, that I was slipped out of the way because I would not take the oaths. I must confess I doubt the truth of it, and I am so well satisfied of your friendship, that 'tis not possible for me to imagine you

* Kennett MSS. vol. xvi. p. 348. Life, p. 161.

The importance which was attached to Nelson's conversion is shown by the foreness with which it is alluded to by the Publisher of Hickes' "Constitution of the Catholic Church." "I have given this account of the writing this letter to Mr. Nelson, because some people are apt to make use of his practice as an argument for directing other men's consciences. But they should consider that Mr. Nelson's practice was founded on Mr. Dodwell's reasons; and if they are not good, he was certainly in the wrong. Besides to say that Nelson did such a thing and therefore I may do it too, is the most absurd way of reasoning in the world; for Mr. Nelson was but a man and consequently fallible. And though he was a pious and learned man, yet I believe there is no one who imagines but that our Author was at least his equal in both those respects." pp. viii., ix. So Hearne endeavours to extenuate the loss which the Nonjurors received in his secession. "Mr. Nelson was not much wondered at by Dr. Hickes and his friends for acting thus, since Mr. Nelson had all along spoke generally more honorably of the compliers than of the sufferers, and had written the life of Bishop Bull, that was one of those that always did comply." "Reliquiæ,"—p. 799.

† Luttrell's "Historical Relation," vol. vi. p. 296.

‡ "European Magazine," vol. xv. pp. 353, 4.

designed me any hurt, if you should have chanced to have said anything to that purpose. In times of public ferment the less one is mentioned the better. It was really a very bad cold that carried me into the country the latter end of February, though other reasons prevailed upon me to make a longer stay than I designed.

“ I am, dear Sir,

“ Your most faithful humble servant,

“ ROBERT NELSON.

“ May 17, 1708.

“ To the Rev. Dr. Mapletoft,
at Greenwich.”

“ 22 May, 1708.

“ REVEREND SIR,—There was no occasion to have given yourself the trouble of writing so long a letter. I am very well satisfied you are my friend, and consequently that you are not capable of designing me the least mischief, but ready upon all opportunities to give me the testimony of your true affection. It is very probable the report I mentioned was founded upon the conversation you hint at, for when a story is repeated it generally either gets or loses circumstances. I must give men leave to think as they please; and provided I can keep a conscience void of offence, I am less solicitous of their censures, for I must stand or fall at another tribunal, for which God prepare us.

“ I am, with great esteem and value, dear Sir,

“ Your most faithful friend and servant,

“ R. NELSON.

“ My humble service to Dr. Gastril and Mrs. Gastril.

“ To the Rev. Dr. Mapletoft,
at Greenwich.”

When the hopes of the Jacobite party were rising higher

at the close of Queen Anne's reign, Nelson's eagerness * to promote the interests of the exiled family received additional stimulus, and he joined Hilckiah Bedford in revising and preparing for the press the notorious Jacobite book on Hereditary Right.† The work was intended as a reply to Dr. Higden's "View of the English Constitution," in which he had vindicated the taking of the oaths to Queen Anne, upon the principle of a successful usurpation. It formed a folio volume of 337 pages, in which the author argued from the acknowledged facts of English history, and from some MSS. records in the possession of Lord Treasurer Harley, that the sovereign of England had never urged the plea of possession, but always some hereditary or testamentary right; and he had the assurance to excuse rather than justify Anne's acceptance of the crown, as in trust for her absent brother. "Cases," he says, "may be supposed of princes, who, for want of power and opportunity of doing right to the lawful heir, are forced to endure the burden of a crown, which they would readily and gladly ease themselves of, upon a proper occasion; as when the rightful heir is abroad, in a distant kingdom, and perhaps at the disposal of a foreign prince." The author was Rev. George Harbin,‡ Chaplain to the Lord Weymouth, at Longleat. The Introduction was written by another nonjuring clergyman, the Rev. Theophilus Downes, formerly fellow of Balliol College. The book was carried through the press by the Rev. Hilckiah Bedford, the deprived Vicar of Olney, Bucks, who was then keeping a boarding house for the

* Another illustration of Nelson's Jacobite zeal may be gained from the interposition, which he vainly attempted with Tenison, in behalf of the unfortunate Sir John Fenwick. See Calamy's own Life, 2nd edit. i. 383, 4. And "Memoirs of Tenison," p. 32.

† "The Hereditary Right of the crown of England asserted; the History of the Succession since the Conquest cleared, and the true English Constitution vindicated from the misrepresentations of Dr. Higden's View and Defence." By a Gentleman. 1713.

‡ Nichol's "Literary Anecdotes," i. 167, 168.

Westminster scholars. Leslie and Nelson were reputed at the time to be the persons chiefly concerned in its production, and the following letter* from the latter to Bedford will exhibit the extent to which he was responsible for the volume.

“REVEREND SIR,—I have this day received the enclosed letter,† which brought me the melancholy account of the loss of worthy Mr. Cherry, who has quickly followed his dearly beloved friend Mr. Dodwell. I am not certain whether this excellent person was known to you; but he was intimately acquainted with y^e Dean, to whom you may communicate this bad news, when you find him best able to bear it. In my last letter to him, I told him that he was so ill that his recovery was despaired of, yet I thought it would be too great a surprize if I should immediately follow that stroke with the relation of his death. God grant that these mementos of mortality may quicken our preparation for eternity. According to y^r desire, I am reading over once

* Now first printed from the Rawlinson MSS. in the Bodleian L. 42.

† The enclosed letter from Brokesby to Nelson may be allowed a place in a memoir of the latter:—

“Shottesbrooke, Sept. 24, 1713.

“HONOURED SIR,—I am sorry I should become the messenger of unwelcome news to you. It pleased God about 4 of the clock in the morning after which you left us, that our worthy friend Mr. Cherry was seized with a coma or lethargic distemper, which deprived him immediately of the use of his senses and understanding, which (notwithstanding the use of all methods prescribed by Dr. Brewer and Dr. Crompton, such as of bleeding, blisters, clysters, &c.) he never recovered, but died this morning about 8 or 9 of the clock, and now rests from his labors he conflicted with. Mrs. Cherry (who gives her humble service to you) purposes to observe his desires in making a private funeral for him, to be carried to church by some of his own tenants, and not to invite any to his funeral; otherwise she would upon many reasons have invited yourself. At present, intention is to bury him on Friday night.

“Sir,

“Your much obliged and humble servant,

“FRA. BROKESBY.

“Mrs. Cherry requests your prayers for Mr. Cherry’s disconsolate widow and fatherless children.

“To the honoured Robt. Nelson, Esquire,
at Horton, n^r Windsor.”

more that admirable Treatise Mr. Smith has printed, and may truly say of it, *decies repetita placebit*. I cannot think that Dr. Higden will ever pretend to answer the author, who is much his superior in reason and style, as well as in law and history. I am very much mistaken if that book is not read with universal applause. I do not remember any passages which are obnoxious to the censure of y^e Government, but if I find any which may have a tendency that way, I will not fail to remark them. As to the title, we may discourse farther upon that point when we meet, w^h I hope will be next week, since I purpose to be in town on Wenesday (sic) y^e 30th. I recommend myself to your prayers, and am, with great respect, Reverend Sir,

“Y^r most faithful humble Servant,

“ROB. NELSON.”

“24th Sept. 1713.”

The combined caution of the two friends failed to secure the work from a political prosecution. The book indeed was introduced to public notice with every circumstance of advantage that was possible. “The publication of it,” says Kennet,* “I remember was with some sort of pomp; the title pages, in full half-sheets of good paper, appearing on a Sunday morning upon every conspicuous post and door, to draw away the eyes of all that were going to church, or to any religious worship, with an advertisement happening to be put into the next *Gazette*.” (Oct. 17.) This was supposed to have been done by the contrivance of Bromley,† formerly the leader of the High-Church opposition in the Commons, and now one of the Secretaries of State. Nelson, who was much at Windsor at this time, ventured to appear at Court, and to present (it is said) to her Majesty, a richly bound copy of the work, which lay in the royal closet for

* “Wisdom of looking Backwards,” p. 313.

† Calamy (Life ii. 268) says that many copies were presented to those in power; Boyer adds to officers in the army (Annals of Q. Anne, p. 657,8).

some days after.* (Nov. 13, 1713.) Popular opinion, however, ran so high against the book, that the ministry found themselves compelled, at the instance of the Hanoverian Minister, to prosecute the reputed author, who was sentenced by the Court of Queen's Bench (Feb. 15, 171 $\frac{3}{4}$)† to be imprisoned for 3 years, to pay a fine of 1000 marks to the Queen, and to go round Westminster Hall the Friday following, in view of the several courts, with a paper on his breast denoting his crime. He possessed, however, sufficient interest to procure a remission of the more ignominious part of his sentence; and when the Friday came, and a concourse of people were assembled to witness the humiliation of the Jacobite advocate, Bedford produced a pardon to that extent, obtained, it was thought, by the intercession of Nelson.‡

Nelson lived long enough to share with his brother Nonjuror, the mortification of seeing their doctrine of Hereditary Right effectually repudiated by the accession of George I.; and his charitable zeal prevailed so far over his political bias, as to induce him to take a leading part in an exhibition of the Charity Schools on the new King's entry into the Metropolis. To the personal influence, however, of his different nonjuring friends, must be ascribed, in a great measure, that charitable zeal which eventually had the effect of weakening his adhesion to their body. In their communion, he continued, as we have seen, for nearly 20 years of his life. From among them he chose his dearest friends; and, under their guidance, he matured his theological opinions, and composed his devotional works. Excluded as the Nonjurors were from the pastoral care, pinched with

* "Wisdom of looking Backwards," p. 317. That *Nelson* was the person who presented the book is denied by Hearne, "Reliquiæ," i. 387.

† See State Trials, ix. 682.

‡ Lansdown MSS., 1024. Brit. Mus., being Kennett's MSS. Collections, vol. xvi. p. 444.

poverty, compelled to devote their leisure to literary engagements, living, moreover, in a constant fever of political excitement and depression, they were precluded from taking any active share in the educational and charitable endeavours of the time. But to them belongs the credit of having trained amid their ranks as influential a religious writer, and as munificent an example of charity, as that or any age of our Church has produced.

of their establishment* recalls the circumstances under which the similar societies of St. Vincent de Paul were founded at Paris sixty years before. A few young men belonging to the middle station of life, impressed by the sermons of Dr. Horneck, the well-known preacher at the Savoy, and of Mr. Smithies, lecturer at St. Michael's Cornhill, touched so with a sense of their sins, and earnestly desiring to live nearer to God, began to feel their need of closer and spiritual intercourse and of mutual encouragement in the practices of piety. And they formed themselves, therefore, by the advice of some clergymen, into a religious society, the members of which agreed to meet together one evening in the week for religious conference ; on which occasions they sang psalms and prayed, read portions of Holy Scripture, and discoursed upon some point of practical religion. They were all zealously attached to the Church of England, and when in King James the Second's reign they saw the mass celebrated daily in the Chapel Royal and elsewhere, they resolved, in a spirit of laudable emulation, to set up daily prayers at eight in the evening at St. Clement Danes, where they " never wanted," we are told, " a full and affectionate congregation." Their earnest anxiety to guard themselves from declension in religion secured their frequent reception of the Holy Communion, and their carefulness to receive it with unimpaired reverence induced them to set up preparation lectures on the Sunday or Friday preceding its administration at many churches in town. And not content with receiving the Sacrament upon the holydays of the Church, they were in the habit of meeting at one another's houses on the vigils, or evenings preceding, in order to discourse piously upon the subject matter of the day. To this anxiety to promote

* See the "Account of the Rise and Progress of the Religious Societies of the City of London, &c., and of their endeavours for Reformation of Manners," by Josiah Woodward, D.D. The 7th edition. 1800.

their own personal religion, they were not forgetful to add practical works of charity. Each member brought to the weekly conference a contribution proportioned to his means, toward the common fund, out of which sums were granted for the relief of the poor, whom they sought out at their homes, for the maintenance of charity schools, in the establishment and management of which the members specially interested themselves; for the support of daily prayers and lectures; and for the promotion of Dr. Bray's designs in the American plantations.

These societies did not pursue their path of piety and usefulness without having to contend against something of prejudice and suspicion. It was objected by men of duller sensibility in religion, who did not themselves feel the need of such spiritual intercourse, that their promoters were but setting up a church within a church, and refining upon the Christian communion which was to be enjoyed at the Holy Table of every parish; while, with greater justice, the facility was pointed out with which such associations might be perverted to party purposes, and lead to the formation of sects within the Church, or of schisms from her pale. The unaffected piety, however, and the zealous labours of their members, prevailed over such contingent disadvantages, and obtained them the favour of Tillotson, Compton, and many other of the prelates; while the opportunity of sympathetic intercourse that they afforded to young men like-minded in religion, satisfied a genuine craving of human nature, and ensured their rapid increase and extension; so that at last as many as forty-two different associations held their meetings in London, and similar societies were established at Oxford, Cambridge, Dublin, Drogheda, and many other large towns, and even in some rural parishes.

Robert Nelson was keenly alive to their usefulness and

value, and gives them * a foremost place amid the different methods, which he enumerates, for promoting the life and spirit of Christianity at home ; and in the preface to his "Festivals and Fasts" he thinks proper formally to undertake the defence of their constitution.

"I think it a great piece of justice," he writes, "to acknowledge and commend the pious and devout practices of the Religious Societies, who in this point as well as in many others, distinguish themselves by their regular conformity and obedience to the laws of the Church ; for they constantly attend the public assemblies upon such holy seasons. And till they can communicate regularly in their own parish churches upon such days, they embrace those opportunities that are provided, there being two churches in London employed for that purpose ;† where they as duly receive the blessed Sacrament upon all festivals, as they perform all the other acts of public worship. How they spend the vigils, in preparing their minds for a due celebration of the ensuing solemnity, is more private, but not less commendable. And the great care they take to suppress the dawning of enthusiasm, and to discountenance the first appearances of any vicious practices amongst their members ; and the methods they impose before delinquents are entirely reconciled, or totally rejected, is such a preparation of the minds of the laity for the reception of that discipline which is wanted in the Church, that if ever we are blessed with what good men wish for, and bad men fear, these religious societies will be very instrumental in introducing it, by that happy regulation which prevails amongst them. And while they pay that deference they profess to their parochial ministers, and are ready to be governed by their Rules and Orders to the judgment of the reverend clergy, I cannot apprehend but that they must be very serviceable to the interest of religion, and may contribute very much to revive that

* "Address to Persons of Quality and Estate," by Robert Nelson, Esqr., 1715. p. 136, 7.

† St. Mary le Bow and St. Dunstan in the West.

true spirit of Christianity, which was so much the glory of the primitive times."

That this special apology was made necessary by some particular attacks then made upon the societies, is rendered probable by the notice that was taken of it, a few weeks after,* at the meeting of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge; when

"Mr. Brewster acquainted the Society that Mr. Nelson had lately published a book, entitled, 'A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England,' and that in the preface he had made very honourable mention of the Religious Societies, and vindicated them from the objections made against them. And the book being produced, the paragraphs relating thereunto were read. Resolved, that the hearty thanks of the Society be given to Mr. Nelson, for the composing and printing his said excellent treatise, and particularly for what was now read; and that Sir John Phillips and Mr. Brewster be desired to acquaint him with the same."

On the 13th January following, it was agreed "that the treasurer do deliver a copy to the steward of each of the Religious Societies, at their quarterly meeting." And a subsequent minute† illustrates the advantage which they derived from the advocacy of Nelson:—

"A letter was read from Mr. Ellis of Sheffield to Mr. Skeate, certifying that lately at York, he found two Religious Societies of young men; that he assisted at one of them, which met under the direction of Mr. Bradley; which society at first were afraid that the Archbishop would not approve of their meetings; but that since then, Mr. Bradley had assured them that his Grace is perfectly reconciled, and in a particular manner returned his thanks to Mr. Nelson for his account of them, in his preface to the 'Feasts and Fasts of the Church.'"‡

* 23rd Dec., 1703.

† July 14, 1706.

‡ The sequel of these societies is melancholy and disappointing. They

2. *Societies for the Reformation of Manners.*

Many of the members of the Religious Societies were also engaged in the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, which have sometimes been confounded with the former, but which differed from them both in their object and in their organisation.* The chief design of the Religious Societies was, as we have seen, the promotion of personal piety among their members, who were all communicants of the Church of England; while the object of the other was the enforcement of the laws against vice, an undertaking in which dissenters from the Church were freely allowed to co-operate. These latter societies had their origin, about 1691, in the efforts of five or six private gentlemen at London, who set themselves to recover public morality from the excesses which had disgraced it under Charles II., and which still maintained an unblushing face, in spite of the more decorous example of William and Mary's court. One of these Reformation Societies was a central body, composed of eminent lawyers, members of parliament, magistrates, and other gentlemen, who met together for consultation how best to put in force the

largely shared in the High-Church enthusiasm of Q. Anne's reign, imbibed a tincture of Jacobite tendencies, became obnoxious to the new Government, and drew down some obloquy on the Charity Schools which they had supported. They perished in the decay of religion under the Georges, one of their last annual meetings at Bow Church being in 1738, when they listened to a sermon of Dr. Berriman, warning the members against being led astray by the irregularities of Whitfield. After that time, the warm piety which had animated these religious societies and given such vigor to the Church's work, was drained off into another channel.

* See an "Account of the Societies for the Reformation of Manners in England and Ireland, with a persuasive to Persons of all ranks to be zealous and diligent in promoting the Execution of the Laws against Prophaneness and Debauchery, for the effecting a National Reformation." The 5th edition. 1701.

Also an "Account of the Progress of the Reformation of Manners in England, Scotland, and Ireland, and other parts of Europe and America, with reasons and directions for our engaging in this glorious work." The 14th edition, with additions. 1706.

laws against swearing, drunkenness, and profanation of the Lord's Day, and who subscribed towards the expenses of prosecution. A second society consisted of about fifty tradesmen and others, who made it their business to suppress the debauchery of the streets. The members of another association undertook the obnoxious task of public informers, and brought the delinquents to punishment. Other bodies were variously constituted in the metropolis for similar objects; and affiliated societies were formed at Hull, Nottingham, Bristol, and other provincial towns; blank warrants being sent down from London to the local associations for execution upon offenders, with an abstract of the penal laws for the guidance of their members.

The design was encouraged by royal proclamations and parliamentary addresses. A new Act of Parliament was obtained against cursing and swearing. Grand juries, in their presentments, took notice of these exertions. The dignitaries of the Established Church warmly exerted themselves in the cause. Tenison recommended the societies to his suffragans in a circular letter. Bishop Fowler wrote a vindication of their proceedings. Stillington brought them under the notice of Queen Mary. Bishops Kidder, Williams, and Trelawney, Patrick and Burnet, Dr. Bray and Dr. Stanhope made honourable mention of them in their charges, or preached before them at their quarterly meetings at Bow Church. Under such patronage the inferior members of these societies prosecuted their undertaking with a zeal which sometimes bordered upon intolerance. Seventy or eighty warrants were sometimes executed in a week upon common swearers in the metropolis, "so that our constables sometimes of late have found it difficult to take up a swearer in divers of our streets." The Sunday markets, which had been kept open for some years previously, were effectually suppressed; drovers and carriers were stopped

in the road ; bakers were not allowed to appear in the street with their baskets, or “ barbers with their pot, basin, or periwig-box ;” a strict watch was kept on public-houses, and “ no tippling was allowed in them on the Lord’s Day ;” hundreds of dissolute houses were closed, and “ some thousands of lewd persons were imprisoned, fined, and whipt, and the Tower end of the town much purged from that pestilential generation of night-walkers ; forty or fifty of them being sent in a week to Bridewell, from whence, at their own desire, they were transported to America, to gain an honest livelihood in the plantations.” While to such cogent measures the milder persuasions of argument were added, and no less than 100,000 short tracts against drunkenness and other vices were gratuitously dispersed throughout the country, especial care being taken to present them to the culprits upon conviction.

Such unsparing attacks upon vice provoked (as might be expected) no inconsiderable opposition. The agents of the societies often came into rough contact with the profligates of the town. A Mr. Cooper was murdered by some soldiers, as he was assisting a constable in the execution of his office. And the tragical end of a Mr. Dent excited general indignation, the societies attending his funeral at St. Clement’s Church, Dr. Bray preaching a funeral sermon, and six justices of the peace bearing the pall on the occasion. Opposition of another kind was offered by De Foe, who (in this, as in so many other points, before his age) remonstrated against the plan of suppressing vice by penalties, and satirically advised the higher classes to reform the manners of the people by example rather than by law. On the other hand, the High-Churchmen of the day took objection to the constitution of the societies, as an undesirable combination of churchmen and dissenters ; Archbishop Sharp refused to countenance their establishment at

Nottingham, and Dr. Sacheverell preached against them in an assize sermon at Derby.

Robert Nelson's High-Church principles did not, however, prevent him from co-operating with dissenters in the enforcement of public morality, nor did he exhibit any distrust in the efficacy of such compulsory measures for the suppression of vice, or betray any of our modern disinclination for their adoption. He was a warm supporter and advocate of the societies for the reformation of manners, pleading that among their good effects "many offenders, by being thus legally prosecuted, have been brought to a sense of their sin and folly, and have been reclaimed; so that, by the blessing of God upon these endeavours, great good hath been done, not only to the removing of public scandal and ill examples, (in which this work hath had so very great success), but, as we have reason to hope, in rescuing souls from everlasting destruction." He would make the support of these endeavours a matter of obligation with all consistent Christians, and argues that "it looks somewhat like mocking of God, when we pray that He would reform the wicked, and do not our endeavours to assist therein. How can we pray that magistrates 'may minister justice to the punishment of wickedness and vice,' when we make not one step towards having our prayers answered, either by giving information against offenders, or by contributing money, or otherwise, for the detecting of them?" And he concludes* with a recommendation of the "'Account of the Society for the Reformation of Manners in London and Westminster,' writ with great seriousness and judgement by a worthy gentleman, who is eminent in doing good; and if, after that, any one hath any objection to be answered, let him read Mr. Disney's 'Essay upon the execution of the Laws

* "Address to Persons of Quality and Estate," pp. 153 seqq. See also his "Life of Bull," p. 366.

against Immorality and Profaneness ;' which it is impossible to read without being affected with it, if he have any sense of religion, or any concern for the good of his country."*

3. *Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.*

Toward the Religious Societies, and the Societies for the Reformation of Manners, Nelson stood in the relation of an apologist and patron. Of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge he was one of the earliest and most influential members, and all but one of its original founders. This venerable Society was first established at the end of 1698 by a few friends of Dr. Thomas Bray, in pursuance of the following agreement: "Whereas the growth of vice and immorality is greatly owing to gross ignorance of the principles of the Christian religion, we whose names are underwritten do agree to meet together as often as we can conveniently, to consult, under the conduct of the Divine providence and assistance, how we may be able, by due and lawful methods, to promote Christian knowledge." The earliest recorded meeting of the Society was on the 8th of March following, when Lord Guildford, Sir Humphrey Mackworth, Justice Hook, Dr. Bray, and Col. Colchester were the members present. To these were shortly added many of the most eminent churchmen of the day. Among the prelates, Bishops Fowler and Williams, and Kidder, Lloyd of Worcester, and Evans of Bangor became members of the Society; Burnet encouraged it by a donation of 10l. per annum; and Patrick, when waited on with a

* These societies continued their exertions for about 40 years. In 1757, when they had been for a few years quite extinct throughout the kingdom, an attempt was made to revive them by some members of Wesley's and Whitefield's congregations, in conjunction with some Dissenters. John Wesley preached a sermon before the new Society, Jan. 30 1763, at the chapel in West-street, Seven-dials.

printed account of its proceedings, "heartily thanked God for it," and promised to "give it all the countenance he could." Among the inferior clergy, Mr. Shute, the lecturer of St. Mary's, Whitechapel, Dr. Manningham, then rector of St. Andrew's, Holborn, Sir George Wheeler (Hickes's pupil), and Nelson's old friend Dr. Mapletoft, were the first to join in the undertaking; while among the lay members were found the names of William Melmoth, Sir Richard Blackmore, and Robert Nelson. Among the corresponding members, who disseminated the publications of the Society, and reported the progress of religion in their several localities, were John Strype the antiquary, vicar of Lowleyton, Gilbert White of Selbourne, George Mompeffon of Mansfield Notts, Francis Bragge of Hitchin, author of "Discourses on the Miracles;" Samuel Wesley of Epworth, who sent an account of a religious society in his parish; William Reeves, the translator of the early Christian Apologists, whose acquaintance Nelson made at his vicarage of Cranford; Dr. Grabe, for the dominions of the King of Prussia; and Dr. Wilson, Bishop of Man.

Two of the main objects to which the Society addressed itself, were the establishment of charity schools, and the promotion of Dr. Bray's missionary designs; objects which will claim a separate notice in this enumeration of Robert Nelson's "Ways and Methods of doing Good." The circulation of books of piety formed from the first another branch of their operations, and among the publications which Nelson saw placed upon their list, mention may be made, in addition to his own writings, of Dr. Woodward's tracts against Drunkenness and Swearing, Ostervald's "Abridgement of the Bible," "The Faith and Duty of a Christian," Lewis's "Church Catechism explained," Bradford on Regeneration, Melmoth's "Great Importance of a Religious Life," Bull's "Corruptions of the Church of Rome," the "Life of James Bonnell," and Scougal's "Life of God

in the Soul of Man ;” as works which after a period of 150 years still maintain their place upon the catalogue of the Society. Another object which engaged much of their time, and to which their attention was directed by Bishop Compton, was the moral and religious condition of the inmates of our gaols. Mr. Shute was directed to confer with the ordinaries of Newgate and Ludgate, and Col. Colchester with the City Marshal on the subject. Dr. Bray and Mr. Stubbs, the admired reader of the Spectator,* were deputed to visit the apartments of the prisoners, and a Committee of Prisons was appointed to report on the abuses of prisons and their remedies ; the pious Mr. Bœhm, chaplain to Prince George of Denmark, who was himself in the habit of visiting the metropolitan prisoners once a week, offering his co-operation. Bibles and Prayer books were provided for the different wards, Kettlewell’s “Office for Prisoners” was gratuitously dispersed among the inmates, and a Mr. Rawlins appointed preacher at the Marshalsea, which had previously been destitute of a chaplain. A packet of religious books was sent to every county gaol. A form of prayer drawn up for criminals condemned to die was dispersed by four of the judges, and endeavours were made to secure the unhappy criminals the privilege of a separate cell, in which they might more religiously prepare themselves for their end.

Other classes of the population received particular attention. Suitable books of devotion were dispersed among the patients of the London hospitals. 30,000 copies of the “Soldier’s Monitor” were sent to the army in Holland. A plan for the reformation of Seamen was taken into consideration, and Admiral Benbow and Sir George Rooke undertook to have similar tracts dispersed throughout the fleet. 800 “Kind Cautions against Swearing” were distributed

* No. 147.

in town among the hackney coachmen; "Kind Cautions to Watermen" were dispersed among the West country barge-men, and 26 copies were given by the Secretary "to one Chamberlayne, a waterman, a very honest and good man, who had promised to disperse them among all the watermen where he should think that they would do most good." While at the same time the vices of the upper classes did not escape animadversion, representations were drawn up of the immoralities of the stage, and a protest lifted against the practice of duelling.*

To these exertions at home the Society added an active interest in missionary undertakings abroad. They early gave a liberal support to the Danish missionaries in Malabar, and printed a Portuguese Testament for their use; they procured a catechism to be drawn up by Bishop Williams of Chichester for the Greek churches, and had them translated into Romaic by some Greeks then studying at Oxford. Bibles and prayer books were sent to Newfoundland, and missionaries proceeding to Virginia and Pennsylvania were provided with these and other books of devotion. The French refugees going to America were supplied with tracts in French, and Dutch tracts were sent for distribution in Holland. The refugees from Orange, then laid waste by the French, were consoled with copies of Kettlewell's "Office for the Persecuted;" and attention being called by Dr. Woodward to the state of the English captives in the Island of Ceylon, it was "ordered that fifty of the 'Consolatory Letters to Slaves,' be delivered to Dr. Evans" for their use.

The assiduous and influential part which Robert Nelson took in these proceedings will be best exhibited by a series

* "Resolved, that the thanks of this Society be given to Sir John Phillips, for the noblest Christian example he has shown in refusing a challenge after the highest provocation imaginable, and that the Lord Guildford be pleased to acquaint him therewith." Minute of Dec. 21, 1699.

of extracts from the minutes of the Society, and from his own letters to Wanley, the Secretary.

Thus we find, on June 8th, 1699, that Mr. Nelson was proposed the first time; on the 19th he was proposed a second time, and Dr. Bray and Mr. Melmoth undertook to inquire concerning him; on the 22nd he was finally "approved of," and Dr. Bray and Mr. Shute requested to desire him to attend. On the 27th of the following January we find him proposing as member the then fashionable physician and poet, Sir Richard Blackmore, and, on March 5, taking his seat at the Society's meeting as chairman for the month.

On this latter occasion, by the interest of Nelson, Humphrey Wanley was appointed Secretary, and the advantage of his correspondence kept Nelson acquainted with the proceedings of the Society, whether he were attending his wife to the waters of Tonbridge or Bath, paying a visit to her son, Sir Berkely Lucy, at Woodcote, or making a more congenial stay with the Berkely family at Cranford. Many of the letters have been preserved which Nelson addressed to Wanley in reply. Thus he expresses his confidence in the qualifications of the new Secretary :—

"You are so well qualified to serve the Society whose prosperity I am most zealously concerned for, that, as that engaged me first in your interest, so it will always incline me to favour and promote it; and if I find upon any occasions some of our members less sensible of it, I shall endeavour to set your merits in a true light. I perfectly see the difficulties you contend with, and hope a little time, with the help of your patience and prudent conduct, will entirely master them. I am very glad you go thro with settling the correspondence upon a good foot; the putting it into a right method may cause some present trouble, but the future ease and advantage will sufficiently recompense it."

On another occasion he sympathises with Wanley in the annoyance he experienced from some attempts of the previous Secretary, to dislodge him from his employment. "I cannot sufficiently wonder why Mr. Chamberlayne should trouble the Society with his complaints. I must confess, I have that opinion of your conduct as to believe that it will always be seasoned with piety and prudence."—"The service you pay the worthy Dean of Worcester, increases the value and esteem I have for you, for I think he may deservedly be placed in the first rank of the great men of this age. I beg he may have my most humble service;" or "I am sorry Mr. Chamberlayne continues to give you so much uneasiness; he is resolved to make your patience as conspicuous as your other good qualities." He wishes his friend "a good and merry Easter; and that, with a great many commendable qualities, you may preserve the exercise of all Christian virtues, in which are laid the surest foundation of our happiness." He reports that Mr. Bennett of Colchester (the well-known opponent of the Dissenters) would become a correspondent of the Society; he encloses Mr. Bull's letter about undertaking a similar charge; or he suggests that "if you want a correspondent for Bath, methinks Archdeacon Clement, who lives here upon the spot, might be very proper for that purpose." Even when attending on his mother's death-bed, Nelson does not suspend his interest in a remonstrance the Society was presenting against the playhouses of the day, but presses his friend to "let me know what is done" in it. He begs Wanley to bring with him his translation of Ostervald's "Catechism" to the Meeting of the Society, at Serjeant Hook's, "for I have prevailed with Dr. Stanhope to revise it, and have promised my assistance." He discusses Dr. Manningham's opinion in reference to the etymology of Maundy Thursday,

and owns that some agree with him in thinking "that that being the day our Blessed Saviour instituted the Blessed Sacrament, and left that great *command* to them of commemorating Him in that action, it was therefore called *dies mandati*; though (he adds) Spelman derives it with much greater probability from the French word *mande*, which signifies *Sportula*; *quasi dies Sportularum*; it being the custom of the kings of France, when they washed the feet of the poor upon that day, to be very charitable in the distribution of their alms." He writes from the country, at another time, for "the minutes of the four last meetings, as well as those of this day, that I may not be a stranger to the affairs of the Society. My long absence has been partly occasioned by a severe fit of the gout in both my feet, under which I labour at present. I was seized from my own home, and continue at the Countess Dowager of Berkeley's, at Cranford, in Middlesex, where the penny-post reaches." In reply to an invitation to be present at the annual dinner* of the Society, he regrets that his distance from town will prevent his "attending the sociable and friendly meeting designed next Wednesday; however, I desire you to pay my half-crown to the stewards, and it shall be accounted for." He commissions Wanley to secure Dr. Manningham to take his place as chairman of the Society's meeting; and regrets that he will not be able to be present himself, as the dark October nights would not favour his return to Blackheath.

The removal of his residence from Blackheath to Ormond Street, in the autumn of 1703, enabled him now to become one of the most regular attendants at the weekly meetings of the Society, and his name is constantly occurring at this time in the minutes of its proceedings. Thus:—

* At this dinner, the 13th Chapter of 1 Corinthians was always read to the Society during the meal.

"1703. Nov. 11.—Mr. Nelson in the chair. Mr. Nelson laid upon the table a dangerous libel entitled 'The Principles of the Protestant Reformation explained,' and acquainted them with the ill principles contained and suggested therein; and also, that he had already taken care to send one of them to a Minister of State (the Earl of Nottingham) with a letter desiring him to take cognizance of the matter, and care to find out and punish the author * and printer. For which information the Society returned him thanks.

"Nov. 18.—Mr. Nelson is appointed on a committee for establishing lending libraries in Wales.

"Dec. 16.—Mr. Nelson produced before the Society the 11th volume of Tillotson's Sermons, and out of Sermon XI., on Ephesians iv. 29, he read two paragraphs against plays, on which it was agreed that the said paragraphs might be forthwith printed, and dispersed among ladies of quality, &c., with very good effect. Also that at the bottom of the said paper a query might be put, whether acting the 'Tempest' upon the next Wednesday after the late dreadful storm, at the new play-house in Little Lincoln's Inn Fields, was proper or seasonable?

"March 2.—Mr. Nelson acquainted the Society that he had received a letter from Sir John Phillips, wherein

* The author of this tract was the Rev. William Stephens, Rector of Sutton in Surrey, who, while holding cure of souls in a Christian Church, disgraced his ministerial office by a series of virulent and sarcastic pamphlets, which had the hardly disguised object of bringing religion and its ministers into contempt. For a tract of a similar character written by him in the following year, he was fined 100 marks, and sentenced to stand twice in the pillory; the latter portion of the sentence being remitted in respect for his profession, only after he had been brought to a public-house at Charing-Cross, from whence he might view the preparations for its execution.

Against his tract on the Principles of the Protestant Reformation, Nelson in vain invoked a public prosecution; and thought proper accordingly to reply to its arguments in the following Pamphlet:—"The necessity of Church Communion vindicated from the scandalous aspersions of a late Pamphlet, Entitled, The Principles of the Protestant Reformation explained, in a Letter of Resolution, concerning Church Communion. Humbly offered to the consideration of the Right Rev. and Rev. Clergy, assembled in Convocation.

"Haud Scio an pietate adversus Deos sublatâ, fides etiam et Societas humani generis, et una excellentissima virtus, Justitia, tollatur. Cicer. De Natu. Deor.

he proposes the erection of a like workhouse in the city of Westminster, as has been erected in the city of London ; he being of opinion that the same Act of Parliament which empowered the city of London to set up such a workhouse extends also to the liberty of Westminster.

“ 1704. April 27.—The Secretary produced his trans-

“ London, Printed for A. and J. Churchill, at the Black Swan in Paternoster Row, 1705.”

This very rare tract, which is preserved in the Archiepiscopal Library at Lambeth, is written in a mingled strain of pleasantry and indignation, and in style very much resembles Nelson's earlier tract on Transubstantiation. It may be sufficient to quote his rejoinder to a flippant remark of his antagonist, that if our Saviour were this day upon earth, He would please no party in the Church, nor be well pleased with them.

“ Would not our Saviour, if now on earth,” is Nelson's reply, “ be well pleased with Bishops and Ceremonies ? First, if not with Ceremonies, how came he to be pleased in any age with the Christian Church ? For in all ages the Church had them ; and in the 4th century they grew so numerous, that St. Augustine a little after complained of their burden. Nay, the Apostolical age was not without them ; for then we read of Love Feasts and the Kifs of Charity, and that some of the Apostles themselves, as St. James and St. John, wore the pontifical *περάλον* ; and they, we may suppose, knew much better than you or I do what would displease their Master, when the one was His brother and the other His beloved disciple. Secondly, if not with Bishops, how came they to be always in the Catholic Church ? and every particular Church in all ages to be governed by them ? For tell me, in what age there were none ? or in what year of our Lord their order began ? Our Saviour, you know, was sent by His Father, and as His Father sent Him, so he sent His Apostles, and they Bishops ; and therefore, as their commission was sacred and their order divine, so was it established in the beginning of Christianity, and Bishops in those days were governors of Churches. And hence it is, as we read, that St. James and Simeon were successively bishops of Jerusalem ; Evodius and Ignatius of Antioch ; Linus, Anacletus and Clement of Rome ; Annianus and Avilius of Alexandria ; Polycarp of Smyrna, and Timothy and Titus, the one of Ephesus, the other of Crete ; all of them bishops in that age, and presiding over their several churches before the death of the Apostles. And is it possible, think you, that our Saviour now would be displeased with his own Institution, with that order of men which his Apostles, by virtue of that power He gave them, settled in His Church, and in those early times too before the simplicity of the Gospel, as your phrase is, grew out of fashion. No, no, Sir ; were He now upon earth, you may assure yourself of the contrary, and that if He were displeased, it would be with the Papacy for retrenching and usurping their power, with the Kirk of Scotland, and other Churches, for abrogating their order and advancing Presbyters to their place and dignity. He would be pleased with none who abused that government which he established, much less with you who have not only derided and reviled it, but also the whole body of the clergy, and the Church of God in all ages.”

lation of the service established in the church of Neufchatel, which was referred to Mr. Nelson's perusal.

"Sept. 28.—Mr. Shute acquainted the Society that Mr. Nelson had desired 100 of our small books about Family Devotion, and 'The Christian's Way to Heaven,' to be distributed at Tonbridge; ordered that they be sent accordingly.

"Nov. 2.—Ordered that 200 copies of a tract entitled 'The Whole Duty of a Christian,' by way of question and answer, be bought at the prime cost when printed.*

"Nov. 8.—A letter from Mr. Ostervald to the Society was read, thanking them for their present of books sent to him; particularly for Mr. Nelson's 'Companion for the Festivals and Fasts,' which he hopes will be of great use in completing their service at Neufchatel.

"Feb. 22.—Mr. Nelson reported that Mr. Hodges had received a benefaction of 5*l.*, to be laid out in Bishop Beveridge's 'Exposition of the Church Catechism,' and desired the advice of the Society about the dispersing of them, which the Society were of opinion might be best done in the diocese of St. David's.

"March 1.—Agreed, that Dr. Manningham and Mr. Nelson do attend his Grace the Archbishop of York, and do desire him, in the name of the Society, to print his excellent sermon about keeping a good conscience, which he lately preached in the church of St. Andrew's, Holborn.

"1705. April 13.—Mr. Shute proposed for circulation by the Society a tract entitled 'Forms of Prayer, before, at, and after receiving the Holy Sacrament.' And the Society did refer it to the perusal of Dr. Manningham and Mr. Nelson.

"July 11.—Mr. Nelson acquainted the Society that the Earl of Berkeley would give 25*l.* to the relief of the French confessors in the galleys."

* This Tract was compiled by Nelson.

In August Nelson accompanies his wife to Tonbridge for the benefit of her health, and from thence presses Wanley to keep him acquainted with the business of the Society. "You know when I am in London I frequently attend the affairs of your Society; and as it is in order to do all the little good I can, so it is very necessary that I may be in some measure master of their concerns." And, thanking him for his reply, he adds, "The weather proving very encouraging, and the waters agreeing very well with my wife, we are like to continue here till after Michaelmas; so that I may still hope to be entertained with another of your letters." On his return to London his name again appears in the minutes of the Society.

"1705. Nov. 1.—Mr. Nelson told the Society that he had lately received 500 Bibles and 800 Common Prayer Books, being a benefaction to this Society, who may disperse them where it thinks fit; and that the benefactor desires that poor families may be furnished with them before any particular persons.

"Nov. 15.—A letter was read from Mr. Bedford, of Bristol, certifying that the players who lately acted at Bristol ('The Provoked Wife,' among other lewd plays), are now about to return to Norwich, whence they came. Whereupon the Society did desire Mr. Nelson, Mr. Shute, and three other members to wait on my lord of Norwich, to apprise him of the players' design to return to Norwich, and that he would endeavour to prevent them.

"Nov. 29.—Mr. Nelson has procured a benefaction of 40s., to be disposed of in 'Whole Duties of Man.'"

"Dec. 5.—Mr. Nelson writes that the other benefactor will also give 500 of Bray's 'Baptismal Covenants.'

"Dec. 20.—Agreed, that thirty of each sort of book given by Mr. Nelson's friend be sent into Worcester-shire, where he has an estate.

"Jan. 3.—Mr. Nelson reported that the Lord Bishop

of St. Afaph, is well pleased with the design of printing the Welsh Common Prayer in 12mo., toward which he will subscribe himself, and speak to the other Welsh bishops about it, which being done, Mr. Nelson shall hear from him.

“Jan. 10.—Mr. Nelson reported that the Bishop of St. Afaph had been with him, and told him that he had spoken to the Bishops of Hereford and Bangor about printing the Welsh Common Prayer-book in 12mo., which design they exceedingly approve, and will subscribe to it, and procure the subscriptions of others. That the Bishop of Hereford has a very exact Common Prayer to correct the press by. And the Bishop of St. Afaph desired Mr. Nelson to write to the Bishop of St. David’s about this matter.

“Feb. 21.—A letter was read from Mr. Bull to Mr. Nelson, showing the good affection which the Lord Bishop of St. David’s bears to the design of erecting libraries in Wales; that my lord has subscribed 4l. per annum during his life towards the erecting a charity-school in Carmarthenshire, and that Mr. Bull has subscribed 20s. per annum during his life to the same design. And that notice shall be given of fit persons of Brecknockshire and Cardiganshire to be invited to the correspondence, as soon as they can be pitched upon.

“Feb. 28.—Sir John Phillips reported that the committee was of opinion that Mr. Nelson should be desired to draw up a tract about the due observation of the Lord’s Day, and the Secretary was ordered to signify this to him.”

With this request Mr. Nelson did not think fit to comply, as appears from the following letter to Wanley in reply * :—

“Pray return my humble thanks to the Society for that favourable opinion of me which their obliging message

* March 6, 1705.

seems to imply ; but I am very well satisfied that they have many worthy members much better qualified for that undertaking than I am, and therefore must beg their excuse. Besides, I have delivered my thoughts upon that subject, which will reach all who read my book ; and as for the poorer sort, we have half-a sheet already upon that matter, approved by the Society, and well dispersed, and I am against multiplying treatises without some improvement. I think of being at the Society myself next Thursday ; so that, if you think fit, you may say I will return an answer to your message in person."

"1706. June 20.—A letter from Mr. Nelson, offering the copy of a tract, entitled 'Prayers for Prisoners under Sentence of Death.'

"July 4.—A letter was read from Mr. Williams, of Denbigh, to Mr. Nelson, in which he proposes that the money raised by Mr. Nelson's tract on Confirmation in Welsh (of which many are dispersed gratis by the Bishop of St. Asaph and himself), may go as part of contribution to the Welsh Schools. To which Mr. Nelson gave his assent.

"July 11.—A letter was read from Mr. Burrell to Mr. Nelson, who among other things says, that one Mr. Seymour, a goldsmith, did, at his own charge, procure prayers to be read, mornings and evenings, at St. Christopher's, in Threadneedle Street ; the first instance of that kind.

"Aug. 8.—Upon a motion made from the standing committee to the Society, Mr. Nelson promised to let the Society have what number of the 'Festivals and Fasts' they shall desire, upon the next impression of it, at the same rate as he shall agree with the bookfellers about it.

"Aug. 22.—Mr. Shute produced Mr. Nelson's 'Christian Sacrifice' before the committee, and informed them that the author was willing the Society should have any number of them at prime cost, and the Society, with hearty thanks for his favor, agreed to buy 1000 of them.

"Sept 12.—Agreed that two of Mr. Nelson's 'Christian Sacrifice' should be added to the parcels made up for correspondents.

"Dec. 5.—Agreed that Mr. Nelson be desired to confer with Mr. Sare, about reprinting Bishop Bull's 'Discourse upon the Corruptions of Popery,' by itself.

"Dec. 12.—Mr. Nelson, being desired to confer with Mr. Chishull the bookseller, concerning the reprinting of Archbishop Tillotson's Sermons on Reftitution, was pleased to promise to do so.

"Mr. Nelson reported that Mr. Sare would take no money for the twenty-five tracts about 'Drunkenness,' but did present them to the Society.

"Feb. 27.—Agreed that 500 copies of Bishop Bull's Tracts on Popery, with Bishop Couzins's little tract at the end of it, be bought at the charge of the Society; and Mr. Nelson promised to take charge of this matter.

"1707. Mar. 27.—The Secretary was directed to go on with his Translation of the Liturgy now established at Neufchatel, since Mr. Nelson related that Mr. Ostervald is now willing that a translation of the said liturgy may be printed.

"Mar. 27.—The case of the Archbishop of Gochtan, in Armenia, was laid before the Society by Mr. Nelson, who read a statement from Dr. Cockburn, minister of the English church at Amsterdam, to the effect that the Archbishop and his nephew, Lucas Nurigian, had long resided there for the purpose of procuring a printing-press, and to get types or letters of the Armenian character, for printing books in that language, to promote piety in their own country, and that they had now come over to England, in order to obtain funds to aid them, and to make up several losses which they had sustained. Mr. Nelson further acquainted the Society, that he had seen several of the Armenian books printed at Amsterdam, and that her Majesty and the Archbishops of Canterbury and York, being entirely satisfied with the Armenian archbishop, they had been pleased to

present him with their bounty, in order to the carrying on these his good designs. On which the Society agreed to allow him 10 guineas towards the dispersing of good books, and promoting Christian knowledge in his country.*

“April 17.—Mr. Nelson related that he had moved the Archbishop (Tenison) for the reprinting of his Circular Letter to the Clergy, and that his Grace said he would revise them, and after that confer further with him about it.

“Nov. 6.—Mr. Nelson moved for some of the Society’s small tracts for Mr. Milne, now going to Virginia.

“Dec. 4.—Mr. Nelson related that Mr. Bennett, of Colchester, had given the Society 100 of his ‘Necessity of being baptized with Water, and receiving the Lord’s Supper.’

“Jan. 1.—A letter was read from Mr. Hales, dated at Zell, Dec. 17 last, to Mr. Chamberlayne, importing

* The continued interest taken by Nelson in the affairs of this Ecclesiastic, is shown by the two following letters in his behalf, addressed a few months later to Wanley, who had now exchanged his employment at the Society for the more important post of Librarian to Harley, afterwards Earl of Oxford, the collector of the Harleian MSS. in the British Museum, and then Secretary of State.

“MR. WANLEY,—You will receive this by Mr. Cockburn, son to Dr. Cockburn, who is concerned for the Armenian Archbishop and his nephew Lucas Nurigian. The latter would go away to-morrow, if he has his pass; therefore pray let him know what is, or may be done in the matter. I have taken care that the Secretary shall have specimens of some books which he has printed, which Mr. Cockburn shall convey to you.

“I am, Sir,

“Your humble servant,

“ROB. NELSON.”

“9th June, 1707.”

“MR. WANLEY,—Pray do me the favor to deliver the enclosed letter to Mr. Secretary Harley; and if he shall think fit to procure a royal pass for the Archbishop of Goctan, &c., with the abatement of his own fees, I desire you to take it out of the office, and pay what may be due to his clerks, and send it to me, who will thankfully repay you those charges. Let me hear as soon as you can what answer Mr. Secretary thinks fit to give to my letter, and you will oblige,

“Sir, your humble servant,

“ROB. NELSON.”

“Ormond-street, 5th August, 1707.”

that Mr. Bontheim, Superintendant at Uleffon, a little city about six German miles from Zell, has almost finished his German version of Mr. Nelson's 'Festivals and Fasts,' which he will cause to be printed, though he has received another translation of it from Mr. Scherer. And that if he had had one of these books when it was first published, he would have caused it to be translated into French by this time. That the 'Great Duty of frequenting the Christian Sacrifice' being translated into German by Mr. Scherer, jun., is now in the press, as also the 'Account of the Corporation Society.*' 'The Christian Sacrifice' he printed at Dresden last summer, with a tract of Dr. Woodward's, in the Bohemian tongue, the number of Protestants there being still very great.

"1708, June 10.—Mr. Nelson read a letter from Mr. Hutton, late of Stoke-nayland, removed to Stanford, in Berkshire, representing the state of his parish, and desiring a parcel of Common Prayers, and other good books, for the instruction of his parishioners.

"Sept. 16.—Mr. Raymond, of Ipswich, having sent one of his little tracts on 'Devotion at the Sacrament,' Mr. Nelson was desired to peruse the same, and give his opinion of it.

"1709. April 21.—Agreed, that Mr. Nelson be desired to discourse Mr. Hales and Mr. Scherer about the Neufchatel Liturgy, whether the copy in the Society's possession may be thought perfect.

"June 9.—The Committee reported "that they had considered of Mr. Nelson's letter of the 7th of March, and Mr. A. D. Frank's letter of the 4th of April, concerning a method of circulating books among the clergy in the country, (viz., by a small annual subscription for new books, and by communicating reciprocally catalogues of each other's libraries, in order to lend what one may be provided with more than another;) and propose

* *i. e.* The S. P. G.

that a clause be inserted in the next circular letter to correspondents to inform them thereof.

“Dec. 22.—The Lord Bishop of Waterford introduced by Mr. Nelson.

“Feb. 9.—Mr. Nelson desires a small packet of books for Mr. Pughe of Mathafarn.

“Mar. 2.—Mr. Nelson communicated a letter from Mr. Davies, a minister, to Wm. Pughe of Mathafarn, in Montgomeryshire, Esquire, containing the Articles for regulating a Society of Clergy in that neighbourhood.

“1710. June 15.—The Ordinary of Newgate having suggested to the Society the expediency of providing for such prisoners as were reprieved some better place than the common side of the prisoners, where they were exposed to the vile practices of such ill men as were there confined:—Mr. Nelson reported that he had lately waited on Sir Peter King, and acquainted him with the said motion; and that he approved of the thing; but was of opinion that it could not be done without a clause in some Act of Parliament, empowering the removal of such prisoners out of Newgate before their pardons came down, which has sometimes happened to be several years.

“Sept. 14.—Mr. Nelson reported that he had proposed to the Reverend Dr. Bradford the composing of Morning and Evening Prayers, according to a motion at the last meeting.

“Sept. 7.—Mr. Nelson laid before the Society a paper entitled ‘A Course of Catechising in the Parish of Lambeth, throughout the year.’

“Jan. 4.—Mr. Nelson reported that Dr. Smallridge’s Sermon was very well translated into French, and designed to be printed for the use of foreigners.

“1711. Feb. 11.—Mr. Nelson reported that his Grace the Archbishop of York has subscribed for twenty copies of his book on the ‘Festivals and Fasts’ in Welsh, and desired

the Society to accept of them, to disperse as they shall think fit.

“Feb. 28.—Mr. Nelson acquainted the Society that a gentleman had suggested to him that he believed the many misapplications of poor-rates might be prevented by some proper bill to be brought into Parliament.

“1712. July 17.—The Committee reported that they had considered of a paper delivered to the Society by Mr. Nelson, the 27th of March last, relating to the use of Christian authors in Grammar Schools; and are of opinion that all the Society can at present do to recommend the use of Christian authors, is the publishing a list of such authors as the Society shall approve at the end of Mr. Monro's book, now in the press.* And that a clause be inserted in the next circular, desiring the correspondents to disperse Mr. Monro's ‘Address’ to the masters of Latin Schools, and others that have the care of gentlemen's sons in their neighbourhood, and to return the opinion of such masters, together with their own, concerning it.

“July 31.—Agreed, that Dr. Higden and Mr. Nelson be desired to engage the Rev. Mr. Collier to write a small Treatise, proper to be put into the hands of organists, and other musick-masters, to dissuade them from teaching lewd songs, and composing tunes to obscene ballads or songs.

“July 23.—Mr. Nelson acquainted the Society that Mr. Midwinter and Co. had by them 500 copies of Archbishop Tillotson's sermons on the ‘Nature and Necessity of Restitution,’ and that the proprietors were willing to dispose of them at 16s. 8d. per hundred, and that the whole parcel might be had for 4l.

“Dec. 11.—Mr. Cockburn communicated to the Society an advertisement in the ‘Postboy’ of Tuesday last, giving notice of a fair to begin at Nottingham, on Thursday in Passion-week next year, and to continue eight days.

* An Essay upon Christian Education, showing the necessity and advantage of reading Christian Authors in Grammar Schools. Humbly offered to Parents and Schoolmasters, by Geo. Monro, A.M. 1712.

Agreed, that Mr. Nelson be desired to recommend it to his Grace the Archbishop of York, to use his interest with her Majesty to alter the time of the said fair, as a precedent that may be of very ill consequence to this and other places, if permitted.

“Jan. 22.—Mr. Nelson reported that a gentleman of St. Giles’s parish had presented a dozen copies of Mr. Milbourne’s sermon on Psalmody, preached in that parish, and dedicated to the Society.

“1713. Feb. 25.—Mr. Nelson reported that a friend of his would contribute 10l. per annum towards encouraging the chaplain of the Marshalsea Prison, to commence from Lady-day next.”

In the autumn of the same year Nelson’s name occurs as present for the last time in the books of the Society, viz., on Oct. 14, 1714. A fortnight later, a last and farewell letter was read from him at the weekly meeting, previously to his leaving town for better air at Kensington. And on the 3rd of the February following, his old associates in charity received the news of a final expression of sympathy from the zealous and kindly fellow-labourer whom they had lost; and “Mr. Hoare reported that Mr. Nelson, lately deceased, had ordered him by his will, as one of his executors, to pay 100l. to the Society, for promoting their designs.”

4. *The Charity Schools.*

The erection of Charity Schools makes so distinguishing a feature of the religious movement of Queen Anne’s reign, and the part which Robert Nelson took in their establishment was so prominent and active, as to claim for them a separate notice in this enumeration of “his ways and methods of doing good.” The first stimulus to this educational effort seems to have been given by the opening of a large Roman Catholic school in the Savoy in the latter

part of James the Second's reign, to counteract the influence of which Tenison established a Protestant school at St. Martin's, and some other zealous Churchmen set up the Bluecoat School in St. Margaret's, Westminster. The good work was resumed in a less controversial spirit toward the end of William's reign, and under Queen Anne revived and increased to such a remarkable extent, that within fifteen years (ending 1712), as many as 117 Schools* were set up in London and Westminster, and nearly 5000 poor children had received instruction in them, of whom more than 4000 had been clothed as well as taught, and 2000 had been put out as apprentices. Within the same period more than 500 schools had been established in England and Wales, while the good work had extended to Protestant Ireland, and to the plantations of New England and New York. Additional stimulus was given to these charitable exertions, by the account of Professor Frank's establishments at Halle, which Mr. Boehm translated into English :† while, in return, the "Account of the English Charity Schools," being translated into German, and circulated on the Continent, gave occasion to the establishment of similar institutions in Hesse, in Sweden and Denmark, and in some parts of Switzerland and Russia.

These schools were established and supported almost entirely by members of the Church of England, which then, as now, by her care for national education, showed

* See "An Account of Charity Schools in Great Britain and Ireland, with the benefactions thereto, and of the methods whereby they are set up and governed. Also a proposal for adding some work to the children's learning ; and an Appendix relating to certain Forms and Directions relating to the Schools." The 11th edition, with large additions. 1712.

† "Pietas Hallensis, or a public demonstration of the Footsteps of a divine Being yet in the world, in an Historical Narration of the Orphans-house and other Charitable Institutions at Glaucha, near Halle, in Saxony, by Augustus Hermannus Franck. 1705." No one who is engaged in charitable works, could read this affecting narration of Franck's, without being touched and bettered by it.

herself the true nursing mother of the people. The clergy were almost everywhere among the earliest promoters of them, and the education which was given in them was distinctively religious. The master was not only to be a member of the Church, but "one that frequents the holy Communion, and who is approved by the minister of the parish before he is presented to be licensed by the ordinary." He was to "make it his chief business to instruct the children in the principles of the Christian religion, as they are laid down in the Church Catechism, which he shall first teach them to pronounce distinctly and plainly, and then, in order to practise, shall explain it by some good exposition approved of by the minister; and shall afterwards more largely inform them of their duty by the help of the 'Whole Duty of Man.'" He was to "take particular care of the manners and behaviour of the poor children, and by all proper methods shall discourage and correct the beginnings of vice, and particularly lying, swearing, cursing, taking God's name in vain, and the prophanation of the Lord's Day; at the same time minding them of such parts of the Holy Scriptures and of the Catechism, where those things are mentioned as forbidden by God, and the contrary things as commanded; whereby the children may the better understand the use of the Holy Scripture and their Catechism, and learn to govern their lives thereby." He was to teach the children to pray at home, when they rise and go to bed, and to use grace before and after meat; he was to bring them to church twice every Lord's Day and holiday, and "shall teach them to behave with all reverence while they are in the House of God." And not unfrequently he had to attend divine service with his scholars every day*. Morning and evening prayers were

* Thus at Chevening, Kent, was a school for teaching and clothing 30 poor children, who are obliged to accompany the mistress morning and even-

printed for the use of the children at home, and "Rules and advice for the parents" were ordered to be stuck up in their houses. The scholars were not lost sight of when they went out into the world. Forms of prayer were drawn up for apprentices on leaving school for trade or service, and the old scholars were assembled once a year and a sermon preached before them suitable to the occasion. An admirable Book of Devotion* was written for the poor boys by Mr. Brewster, of Lincoln's Inn, full of piety and kindliness. While Dr. Talbot, of Spofforth, in his "Christian Schoolmaster," endeavoured to form the character of their teachers.

The standard of secular instruction in these schools was sober and sensible rather than ambitious. The boys were taught reading, writing, and the grounds of arithmetic "to fit them for service and apprenticeship." It was thought sufficient to teach the girls to read, to knit their stockings and gloves, to mark and sew, and make and mend their clothes. Industrial occupation was frequently introduced, and the children were taught to spin, and card wool, to mend and make shoes. Boys of unusual parts were especially noticed. The education of adults was not forgotten, and masters and mistresses were "recommended to appoint some evening in the week, to teach such grown people to read, who have been neglected in their youth." Our evening schools were anticipated. And particular mention is made of the worthy clergyman of Mepfale in Bedford-

ing to church. At Finedon, Northants, "A school for lodging and clothing and dieting 20 girls, and teaching them to read, write, and work. They go daily to prayers at the Parish Church." At Sheldon in Warwickshire, "A school has been built by a person of quality, adjoining to the church, where the children go to prayers every day." See Account of Charity Schools, as above.

* "The Christian Scholar; in Rules and Directions for Children and Youth sent to English Schools; more especially designed for the poor boys taught and clothed by charity in the Parish of St. Botolph Aldgate." 3rd edition. 1704. Well worth reprinting.

shire (a Mr. Salmon), who "has with great success prevailed upon the youth of his parish to go to school to learn to read and write, and their Catechism, in the close of the winter evenings, and on the servants of the said parish to come to him once a week for instruction."

The schools were all supported by the voluntary contributions of charity, nor does it seem to have ever occurred to any of their promoters to have recourse to pecuniary grants from the State. Thus in the parish of St. Giles-in-the-Fields, nearly 400*l.* was raised from voluntary subscriptions and collections at church. At the fashionable watering place of Tunbridge Wells, 70 children were taught by the contributions of the nobility and gentry who resorted thither. At Benwell in Northumberland, the proprietors of a colliery set up a school for the children of the pitmen. At Box in Wiltshire, the minister gave his Easter dues for the purpose. At Cambridge, many of the colleges gave their Communion-money. At Cuddestden, twelve poor girls were put to school at the Bishop's charge. At Salisbury, we are told, the whole expense of one school was borne by Bishop Burnet, "who frequently visits and catechises the children, and sets them portions of Scripture to get by heart, which he sees performed himself, and then rewards and encourages their diligence by giving them Common Prayer books, money, &c." At Durham, the Dean and Chapter supported a school of seventy boys. At St. Neot's, the school was erected chiefly by the minister and the religious society in that place. At Cranford in Middlesex, Lady Berkeley was the patron. At Shoreham, the same experiment was tried which has been repeated at King's Somborne in our own times, viz., that of making the school self-supporting by the joint education of children of different grades; and "persons of ability gave more than the schooling of their own children, that the master might have such an income as might enable him to teach the children of the

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poor gratis." In many churches of the metropolis, charity sermons were preached monthly or quarterly for the maintenance of the schools, and general interest was still further enlisted by constant catechising of the children at church, and by quarterly school examinations at nine or ten places in town, at five o'clock in the evening, open to the public ; as well as by an annual assemblage of the school children at St. Sepulchre's Church, the original of the present anniversary meeting in St. Paul's Cathedral.

In the establishment of these schools throughout the country, in all the details of their management, and in every exertion for their support, we see Robert Nelson exhibiting the most constant and active interest. He had hardly been three months a member of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge before we find him writing for a printed form of the usual preamble for establishing a school. The minutes of the Society show him in correspondence with the promoters of schools at York, at Nayland in Suffolk, at Oxford, Beverley, Leicester, Wootton-under-Edge, Bray in Berkshire, Cirencester, and Tring. We find him subscribing to schools in Hampshire and at Queen-Hithe, and interesting himself to procure a master for St. Ann's Soho, and for Bath. He was on the committee of St. Andrew's School, Holborn, and the chief promoter of that attached to St. George's Chapel, Queen-square, in the vestry of which he, with the other trustees and Dr. Marshall, the minister of the chapel, would examine the children in their progress, on the first Friday of every month, after evening prayer. He compiled a practical Catechism* for the charity schools out of the "Whole Duty of Man," and one of his last labours was to read over a translation of

* "The Whole Duty of a Christian by way of Question and Answer, exactly pursuant to the method of the Whole Duty of Man, and designed for the use of the charity schools in and about London." 1704. It ran through 12 editions in the course of the century.

Dean Nowell's Catechism, which had been prepared for their use.* Of the annual meeting of the schools he seems to have been the recognised superintendent, and the arrangement of its details was left, year after year, in his charge.

A few extracts from the minutes of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, may again be given in illustration of this part of his charitable labours.

"1702. Oct. 8.—A letter from Mr. Nelson, desiring that he may apply 4l. per ann., being part of his annual subscription in this Society, toward two Schools in Hampshire, towards which he has very largely contributed. Agreed that Mr. Nelson have leave to apply 4l. per ann. according to his desire.

"1705. April 5.—Mr. Nelson reported that the trustees of the charity schools had met, and that the poor children would walk in procession to St. Sepulchre's Church, the Thursday in Whitsun week; and that he had written to the Dean of Canterbury (Dr. Stanhope) to preach the sermon, who was pleased not to decline it.

"Nov. 15.—Mr. Nelson read part of a letter, certifying that at York the boys' school flourishes, and that there are also twenty-eight girls taught and maintained as the boys are, by the subscription and countenance of divers ladies and gentlemen, among whom the Lord Mayor has done much, and lately dined them in public.

"1706. Sept. 12.—A letter from Mr. Nelson to Mr. Shute, desiring a small parcel to disperse in a charity school at Cranford in Middlesex, to which a lady of quality allows 10l. per annum.

"Jan. 23.—A letter from Mr. Garden of Nayland to

* "The Element of Christian Piety, being an explanation of the Commandments, Creed, Lord's Prayer, and Sacraments. To which are added some Meditations and Prayers. Designed particularly for the use of the Charity Schools, and recommended by the late Robert Nelson, Esq." 1715. See Preface.

Mr. Nelson, importing that Mr. Hutton has procured subscriptions for a charity school there, and desiring some of the 'School Sermons,' and 'Duties of Children and Servants,' which were ordered to be sent to Mr. Nelson.

" 1707. June 5.—Mr. Nelson acquainted the Society that Mr. Gastrel did this day preach an excellent sermon at the meeting of the poor children at St. Sepulchre's Church ; and the Society desired Mr. Nelson and Mr. Chamberlayne to give their thanks to Br Gastrel for the same, and to desire him to cause the said excellent sermon to be printed.

" 1708. Feb. 3.—Mr. Nelson acquainted the Society, that the subscription to the charity school in Queen's Square, near St. George's Chapel, amounted to about 70l. per annum, and that the Lord Bishop of Salisbury preaching * at the Chapel last Lord's Day in the morning, and Mr. Haslewood, in the afternoon, the collections that followed amounted to about 30l. including the offering money.

" May 12.—Mr. Nelson communicated a letter he received from some unknown hands at Oxford, of the 14th of April, acquainting him that several gentlemen of the University, observing the streets filled with idle children, notwithstanding the City and University have set out two very considerable charity schools, to which the said gentlemen have been subscribers, they have resolved to erect another toward which they have subscribed between 50l. and 60l., and opened a school for about ninety children, most of 'em girls ; upon which they desire Mr. Nelson's advice how to apply their fund to the best advantage, and likewise to furnish 'em with rules for the better government of the schools.

" 1709, Feb. 10.—Mr. Nelson is desired to inform

* Sermons are subsequently reported as having been preached at the chapel by Sir Wm. Dawes, then Bishop of Chester ; by Dr. Wilson, the Venerable Bishop of Man ; by Dr. Bisse, Bishop of St. David's, Blackall of Exeter, Wake of Lincoln, and Smallridge, afterwards Bishop of Bristol ; whose services we may well suppose to have been solicited by Nelson on behalf of his parochial schools.

some gentlemen who are setting up a school at Beverly, as to the method observed in the parish of St. Margaret's, Westminster, where many of the poor children are employed in spinning of wool and weaving, others in mending and making of shoes, others in sewing, knitting, &c. As also that the schools at Wapping, and other places near the Sea, have been employed in picking of oakham, &c.

"1710. Mar. 8.—Mr. Nelson reported that the trustees of St. George's Charity School had recommended two children out of that School, to the school lately opened for teaching navigation, by Mr. John Pullen.

"1711. April 19.—The Society being informed that Mr. Nelson would shortly take a journey into Bath:—Agreed, that Mr. Treasurer and the Secretary furnish Mr. Nelson with all the advices formerly sent to the Society, concerning the measures taken to erect a charity school at Bath, and that he be desired to use his interest to promote the same.

"June 21.—Mr. Nelson reported that Mr. Skeete and himself were just now come from meeting the trustees of St. Andrew's School, in Holborn, and that they had given leave to Mr. Dickson, one of the masters of the Charity School in St. Andrew's parish, to go to the Bath school for a twelvemonth, till the school there is formed, upon condition that he shall return at the end of the twelvemonth, and in the meantime provide an able person to supply the school in his absence."

The minutes * of this School, (now known as the Blue-coat School, Bath), supply further details of Nelson's endeavour for its establishment, he being at the pains to send from London, at the request of its promoters, not only a master to settle the methods of teaching, but even a pattern of the school-dress which was to be worn by the children; and receiving in return a formal letter of thanks from the trustees for his share in the charitable

* Communicated by the kindness of J. H. Markland, Esq., D.C.L.

undertaking. The same minutes also preserve two admirable letters of advice from Nelson to Mr. Dixon, the schoolmaster above-mentioned, who seems to have been inclined, at the expiration of the twelvemonth, to quit his post at Bath, for a position of greater emolument in town.

“ March 20, 1711.

“ MR. DIXON.—I hope you have received my letter to you, which was enclosed in Mr. Leasons. I can assure you all your friends in town were much concerned when they heard you had thoughts of quitting Bath; they take your success in that place to be an indication of the call of Providence to reside there, and can you be insensible of God's great goodness which vouchsafes to make you so great an instrument of His service? I can only tell you that if you should remove from Bath, your friends would not have so good an opinion of your Christian zeal as they entertain at present, nor is it probable you would do so much in another place. When we have used our utmost diligence we seldom attain our end without the blessing of God. He has been pleased to prosper the seed you have sown at Bath; but if you think that to be wholly the effect of your own endeavours, and imagine you can do the same everywhere, removing upon human consideration to another place, may convince you by dear-bought experience that you are mistaken. Quiet your own mind, and resolve to go on in that good way you are engaged in, where you will not only instruct children, but be an instrument of doing good to others.

“ I am sorry you mention the difference of a little more certain profit at London. Consider where you in conscience think you can do most good, tho' in my former letter I have said enough to you upon that head. Oh remember what will turn to the best account at the great day, and pursue it. What I have wrote is the effect of great kindness to you, being sincerely,

“ Your most affectionate friend,

“ ROBERT NELSON.”

“ March 29, 1712.

“ MR. DIXON,—I have for a great while expected to hear from you, and chiefly to know your resolution in regard to your fixing at Bath, where the providence of God seems to determine your abode, by reason of that large field of doing good that is there prepared for you. I do not question but that the advantages are equal to what you received at London, tho’ you may remember that I always told you that I would take care to see you satisfied as to that particular, if the trustees should be backward in giving you the allowance you expected. It is certain if the trustees of St. Andrew’s require your return when the year expires, you are obliged to comply with it ; but if they will dispense with your absence, as I have great reason to think they will, your friends here are of the opinion that you cannot do better than to continue at Bath, where God has already so extraordinarily blest your endeavours, and where you have so reasonable a prospect of doing a great deal of more good. I hope you will prefer those circumstances which will enable you to do Almighty God most service, and therefore I am very much pleased with the resolution you have taken of being silent upon this occasion ; from whence I conclude that if your trustees here in town give leave, you are determined to fix at the Bath. I hope you will never stagger concerning it, I will take care to dispose all matters so at London that no blame may be laid upon you for altering your mind ; and you may depend upon my interest, and that of all our friends to serve and oblige you in anything, if you continue in your post at Bath.

“ As I heartily pray for you, so I desire you to remember me in your most retired hours. Your friend Mr. Tayler, as you desired, is chose Secretary to the Corporation for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

“ I am, with great sincerity,

“ Your faithful, affectionate friend,

“ ROB. NELSON.”

It is pleasing to be able to add that these excellent letters

of advice prevailed with this worthy schoolmaster to continue and do his duty in the post in which God had so evidently placed him ; and that afterwards, when one of the Bishops, having listened to his Sunday evening instruction of his scholars, offered him holy orders with a provision in the Church, the advice of his former friend prompted him modestly to decline it, on the ground that he could do more good in his school than in a parochial cure.*

To resume our extracts from the Minutes of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge.

“ 1711. Jan. 31.—Mr. Jennings and Mr. Nelson are desired to request the Dean and Chapter of St. Paul’s to permit the use of the Cathedral for the meeting of the charity schools.

“ Feb. 7.—Mr. Skeete reported that John Honeycott, the master of the charity school at Clerkenwell, had yesterday, with the children of the above school, publicly acted

* These particulars, with others, are to be found in “ The Parents’ and Schoolmaster’s Spiritual Assistant, for grounding their children and those under their care in sound Christian principles, according to the Church of England ; agreeable to the late Mr. Henry Dixon’s instructions in the Charity School at Bath, on Sundays, and the principal festivals in the evening ; by the plan of Mr. Nelson’s Festivals, who recommended him.” London, 1761. The author gives the following account of this worthy man, whose character reminds us of James Davies of Devauden. “ Mr. Henry Dixon was born in London in 1675, who may truly be said to have been a sincere lover of God and man, for the whole course of his life was a continued series of promoting the glory of one, and the present and everlasting happiness of the other. Before he saw 20 years, he was master of St. Andrew’s School in Holborn, from whence he was recommended at the institution of that in Bath by Robert Nelson, Esqr., who was one of the first proposers of it, and the first collector at the door of the Abbey for it. His zeal for propagating sound Christian principles hath appeared, not only from his Sunday evening instructions, which edified numbers who attended them, as well as his own scholars (a laudable example for schoolmasters), but also from his admirable *English Instructor*, which hath passed through 21 editions, whose lessons are formed on the plan of our Church Catechism, inculcating on those tender minds their duty to God, their neighbor, and themselves ; as also from other useful tracts now extant, whereby, though being dead, he yet speaketh, and will live

the play called *Timon of Athens*, and by tickets signed by himself had invited several people to it. And Mr. Skeete laying before the Society an original ticket, together with an account of several observations made by a friend of his who was present at the said entertainment, both which being read, it was agreed, that the acting of the said play by the master and children of the charity school at Clerkenwell is a great reproach to the design of charity schools, and that it is highly worthy the design of the Society to bear testimony against it as scandalous and of pernicious consequence to the charity schools in general.

“Agreed, that Dr. Gastrell and Mr. Nelson be desired to give the thanks of the Society to Sir Richard Hoare and Mr. Henry Hoare for interposing their good offices to prevent the act of the charity school at Clerkenwell.

“Feb. 14.—Mr. Jennings and Mr. Nelson are desired to wait on the Bishop of London to request him to withdraw Honeycott’s licence.

“Mr. Nelson reported that, being informed the Bishop of Chester was to preach last Lord’s Day at St. Magnus for a collection in favor of the charity school at Clerken-

in the memory of many worthy and considerable men bred up by him, whose grand-children he hath with pleasure beheld. He had a great knowledge of human nature, was enriched with the ornament of a meek spirit, whereby he prevailed over the children in the tenderest and most affectionate manner, showing the greatest marks of his esteem to those who most regarded his instructions, and were forwardest in attending religious duties, which raised an emulation in the others to obtain it. He had such a share of Christian sympathy, that when a distressed object (which none could be readier to relieve according to his ability) was proposed to him, tears fell from his eyes, and the pleasure he enjoyed in relieving them was to him a continual feast. On my recommending one, I desired he would excuse me in the many such liberties I had taken. He replied, ‘My dear friend, you have favoured me beyond this poor creature in giving me such a fresh pleasure in doing good, which none know but those who do it.’ He was a great admirer of church music, wrote a tract upon its ‘Use and Abuse,’ and often reflected on some of the organists in the Metropolis for introducing light airs into their voluntaries, which should consist of nothing but what tends to elevate the soul to the divine object of adoration. On the 24th October, 1760, in the 85th year of his age, he was taken to the heavenly choir, to be present among the angels in their harmonious concert, and to add his hallelujah.”

well, and having waited on his lordship last Friday, he acquainted him with the late behaviour of the master and scholars of the said charity school, and that his lordship thereupon resolved not to preach for the said school.*

“Feb. 28.—Mr. Nelson acquainting the Society that a friend of his had informed him that a Bill was intended to be brought into the Parliament in favor of charity schools, and desired him to suggest clauses to promote their welfare. He therefore moved the Society would give him their advice thereon.

“1712. April 3.—Agreed, that Sir Christopher Wren be waited on with the scheme for accommodating the charity school children in St. Paul’s, and that Mr. Nelson and Mr. Jennings be acquainted with Sir Christopher’s opinion.†

“Nov. 13.—Mr. Nelson acquainted the Society that he had observed an advertisement this day in the ‘Post Boy’ of a charity sermon to be preached next Sunday at All Hallows, Lombard Street, notwithstanding notice had been given to all schools about town not to publish such advertisements, which served only to draw together a mob, and to keep away those that would contribute on such occasions.

“April 30.—Mr. Nelson is desired to recommend it to the trustees of the charity schools in general, to give direction to the respective masters and mistresses, strictly to charge the children under their care to observe a due decorum in their behaviour at church upon that day (viz., the anniversary meeting), and to keep silence when the service requires it.‡

“June 4.—The Society being informed of the state of

* The issue of this affair was, that Nelson and others were appointed to meet the Committee of the Clerkenwell School upon the matter, the unfortunate schoolmaster was severely reprimanded, and made his humble submission accordingly.

† Wren objected, under the apprehension of injury that might be done to the fittings of the church.

‡ This was in consequence of ‘the noise made by the children’ the previous year, which “several gentlemen complained of as very offensive.”

that School, Mr. Nelson was pleased to pay 5*l.* yearly towards encouraging of it, as a benefaction from a person that desires to be unknown: Agreed that Mr. Jennings and Dr. Pelling be desired to acquaint the Bishop of London with what passed at Hampstead last Sunday,* to the prejudice of Queen Hithe Charity School that were at church there, and to desire his Lordship's countenance against such obstructions for the future.

"Feb. 26.—It was reported from the Committee, that they had considered of Mr. Osborne's letter of the 14th of November, about a clause for appropriating legacies to pious uses unappropriated for the benefit of charity schools in parishes where such legacies shall be found.—Agreed, that Mr. Jennings, Mr. Meller, Mr. Cotton, and Mr. Nelson, or any two of them, be desired to recommend to the lords bishops the bringing in a Bill for this purpose this session of Parliament.

"1713. April 16.—Mr. Nelson reported that the trustees of the charity schools had resolved to find out a way to place the children in view of the Queen, as she passes to St. Paul's Cathedral, on the Thanksgiving-day; and that, in order to levy money to defray the expense of it, they had agreed to advance sixpence for each child.

"July 16.—Mr. Nelson reported that on the Thanksgiving-day for the Peace, on the 7th current, 3925 charity-children, boys and girls, new clothed, with their masters and mistresses, were placed on a machine or gallery in the Strand, which was in length above 600 feet, and had in breadth eight ranges of seats, one above another, whereby

* This opposition at Hampstead to a collection for the Queen Hithe Charity School, may be explained by the history of a similar disturbance at Chislehurst, on occasion of a collection for St. Anne's School, Aldersgate, which lay under the imputation of being High-Church and Jacobite. See the trial of the Rev. Mr. Wm. Hendley, for preaching a charity sermon at Chislehurst in Kent, for the charity children of St. Anne's, Aldersgate, London; and of George Campman, Robert Hicks, Filiar Harding, and Walter Pratt, the Schoolmaster and Trustees for the charity children, for collecting money for the same, at Rochester Assizes in Kent, before Sir Littleton Powys, Knt., A. D. 1719. State Trials, vol. xv., p. 1407.

they were put in the full view of both Houses of Parliament, in their procession to St. Paul's upon that occasion;* that it was designed as a piece of respect to the Queen; and tho' her Majesty was not present, such a prospect of charity gave great satisfaction to all the spectators; that the charge was defrayed by the trustees of the several charity schools which appeared that day.

"Aug. 24.—Mr. Nelson reported that Dr. Waugh had this day preached an excellent sermon before a considerable number of apprentices and other servants, educated in the charity schools in and about London.

"1714. April 8.—Mr. Nelson reported that the trustees for charity schools had agreed to desire the Bishop of London to preach the sermon at the Anniversary Meeting of the charity schools in and about London, and that his lordship had been pleased to promise to comply with their desire, God giving him life and health.

"Sept. 23.—Mr. Nelson reported that on the King's entry, on the 20th of September current, about 4000

* An engraving of this exhibition of the charity school children, was made by Geo. Virtue for Nelson's friend Sir Richard Hoare, the then Lord Mayor; for which Nelson also endeavoured to procure the encouragement of royal bounty, as appears from the two following letters to the Earl of Oxford.

"MY LORD,—I beg leave to acquaint your lordship that I believe greater expedition might be given to the plates concerning the charity-children, if the person (Mr. Virtue) who does them should receive fifty pounds at present, which I gave him reason to expect. I am, with great respect, my lord, your lordship's most obedient and most humble servant,

"ROBERT NELSON."

"April 7, 1714."

"MY LORD,—I am required by my worthy neighbor the Dean, to return his most humble thanks to your lordship for the royal bounty you have procured for Mrs. Elftob; she wants only to set the press to work; and, therefore, she humbly begs that your lordship would be pleased to despatch the affair. I crave leave also at the same time to remind your lordship of the Queen's encouragement for carrying on the plates of the machine erected for the charity-children in the Strand, which are in great forwardness. I am with great zeal and respect, my lord, your lordship's most obedient and most humble servant,

"ROBERT NELSON."

"June 18, 1714."

children of the charity schools appeared on a machine, containing six ranges of seats, 600 feet long, from east to west, on the south side of St. Paul's Cathedral, erected at the charge of the trustees of the several charity schools, and that as the King passed by, and during most of the procession, the children sang the first six verses of the 21st Psalm, according to Sir John Denham's version.

“ Mr. Chamberlayne reported that his Royal Highness the Prince was pleased to say, that the charity-children was one of the finest sights he ever saw in his life, and that he only wished his own children had been with him to have seen them at the same time.

5. Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts.

The Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel in Foreign Parts was, as is well known, an early offshoot of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. The latter Society had charged itself on its establishment with the promotion of missionary designs in the plantations; but, upon Dr. Bray's return from his labours as Commissary of Maryland, in 1701, he judged it desirable to set up a separate and incorporated society for that special object, and laid before the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge the draught of a charter, which (on his petition) the King was pleased to grant, June 16, 1701. The charter recited the insufficient maintenance, or the total absence of ministers of the Church, in the plantations, colonies, and factories beyond the seas, so that the population “do want the administration of God's Word and Sacraments, and seemed to be abandoned to atheism and infidelity;” and “divers Romish priests and Jesuits are the more encouraged to draw them over to Popish superstition and idolatry.” And the new Corporation was charged

accordingly with "the receiving, managing, and disposing of charity given for the maintenance of an orthodox clergy, and for making such other provision as may be necessary for the propagation of the Gospel in those parts." In the list of the original members nominated by the charter, and among whom are to be found most of the leading members of the elder Society, the name of Robert Nelson does not occur; an omission which may be owing to his known disaffection to the Government as a Nonjuror. The omission, however, was speedily and honourably repaired; and, on November 21 of the same year we find "Mr. Nelson of Blackheath" elected member of the Society, in company with Burnet and nine other of the bishops, and Colonel Nicholson, Lieutenant-Governor of Virginia. Here he continually met the different prelates of the Establishment, who agreed in giving the new Society their unanimous and cordial support; Archbishop Tenison, in particular, who had warmly interested himself in the application for a charter, frequently presiding at its meetings, and urging the establishment of Colonial bishops, for which he left 1000*l.* to the Society at his death.* Here, too, Nelson met, month after month, his old friends of the clergy, Bray, Beveridge, and Mapletoft, Gastrell, and Marshall, the minister of St. George's Chapel; with White Kennett, who, if not one of Nelson's warmest friends, deserves an honourable mention here, as one of the most zealous and laborious promoters of our first Missionary Society. Here, too, he was accustomed to see the familiar faces of his friends Melmoth, Brewster, and Blackmore, and was brought into

* In a codicil of his will, Tenison thus expresses his sense of their necessity:—"Until such lawful appointments and consecrations are completed, I am very sensible (as many of my brethren of that Society also are) that as there has not been, notwithstanding much importunity and many promises to the contrary; so there never will or can be any regular church discipline in those parts, or any confirmations, or due ordinations, or any setting apart in ecclesiastical manner of any public places for the more decent worship of God."

contact with John Evelyn, as kindred a spirit to his own as the record of our English worthies would supply.

Under their direction Nelson saw missionaries, catechists, and schoolmasters sent out to the English colonies in New York, Pennsylvania, Newfoundland, Rhode Island, and New Jersey; a settlement of Welsh was supplied with a minister of their own language, and a clergyman provided for the "poor Palatine" emigrants. Two missionaries were sent to the Iroquois, and another to the negroes of Goose Creek, in South Carolina. The arrival of four Indian Sachems in London, in 1710, lent an additional stimulus to the work of conversion, and the Queen gave 400*l.* for a mission post and chapel in their country. A young chieftain of the Yammousea Indians, being brought over to England, was baptised by Bishop Compton in the chapel of Somerset House. The Morning and Evening Prayer, with the Gospel of St. Matthew, and some other portions of Scripture, were translated into the Mohawk language, and, in 1713, the Society's missionary was able to report eighteen communicants, on Christmas Day last, from that once dreaded tribe. To the English factory at Moscow were sent out a number of Greek Testaments and prayer books; a grant of books was made for the use of the English at St. Helena; a donation was voted towards the erection of an English church at Amsterdam, for which we have seen Nelson soliciting his friend Pepys; a suitable residence was purchased at Burlington for an American bishop; and an edition of the Common Prayer in Dutch was printed for the settlers in New York.

Of the personal share which Nelson took in the promotion of these missionary efforts, the records of the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel have preserved but a meagre notice. We find him present month after month at the meetings of the Society at St. Martin's Library; becoming the medium, year after year, of repeated benefactions from

his brother-in-law, Lord Berkeley, and from his Countess; reporting a donation of “5*l.* from a lady in the neighbourhood of St. George’s Chapel, who desires to be unknown;” proposing his friend Smalridge as a member; auditing Dr. Bray’s accounts on behalf of the Society; making out a list of the libraries which had been sent out by it to the Plantations, and serving on a committee for considering in detail the establishment of colonial fees, in pursuance of the resolution,—“That it is the sense of this Society, that, for the better and more effectual advancement and settlement of religion in America, it is very expedient that bishops and bishoprics be established there.” (May 2, 1712.)

The deep interest which he took in such missions may be better inferred from the mention he makes of this Society,* in his “Ways and Methods of Doing Good,” and from the regret he expresses† that it “being limited by its charter to the British plantations and dominions in the West Indies, cannot, as a Society, engage itself in propagating the Christian faith in Asia and Africa, or in some parts of Europe, which lie to this day in heathenish darkness, notwithstanding that there is at the same time a settled correspondence and commerce with them, as to the things of the earth.” He takes notice of the encouragement which the Christian Knowledge Society, being under no such limitations, felt itself at liberty to give to the Danish missionaries in Malabar. “But it were much to be wished,”

* “Address to Persons of Quality and Estate,” p. 117.

† He writes similarly to Dr. Mapleton (St. Luke’s Day, 1710):—

“I will to-morrow communicate your letter to the Society, who are very much disposed to encourage the mission in the East: I think it is a pity that our charter confines all our endeavours of that kind to the Western Plantations. I enclose you what has been done already, and I hope you will solicit for it in your neighbourhood. I despair of finding any of that sort of zeal among us, which will carry any of our clergy to such distant places, where they are exposed to so many hardships: the business of party takes up all our zeal, and we are at our wits end if any great men are employed that we don’t like.”—*European Magazine*, vol. xvi., p. 167.

he adds, "that some missionaries also, of our own, should be provided to go out among the infidels, where we have any settlement among them;" and that what the Danish missionaries have already effected "would excite a spirit of zeal and emulation in our universities, and especially in the younger students of divinity, to offer themselves to be sent forth on this glorious undertaking." With allusion apparently to Sir Leoline Jenkins' foundation at Jesus' College, Oxford, he suggests, that fellowships "might be assigned for the encouragement of such as should present themselves to be employed in an apostolical mission to any part of the world, more particularly to the East Indies;" and that "some ecclesiastical dignities or benefices might be appointed for a reward for such missionaries of the Gospel, or chaplains to our factories among infidels, as shall be found at their return to have laboured faithfully for such a certain term of years in the conversion of the unbelievers to the Truth, and to have fully discharged the high trust committed to them by God."*

6. *The Designs of Dr. Bray.*

The religious and charitable designs of Dr. Thomas Bray were not altogether merged in the operations of the two great societies which were founded at his instance. He still carried on his plans for parochial and other libraries, with the advice and assistance of a body of associated trustees, who survive to the present day as a separate institution, under the title of "the Associates of Dr. Bray," and the share which Nelson took in its management must give it a place here among his "Ways and Methods of doing Good."

It was upon his appointment as Commissary to Maryland in 1695, that Dr. Bray† first expressed his sense of the

* "Address to Persons of Quality and Estate," pp. 117, 130, seqq.

† See "Public Spirit illustrated in the Life and Designs of the Rev. Thos.

necessity of providing libraries for the use of the poorer clergy, in the following proposal :

“That, since none but the poorer sort of clergy, who could not sufficiently supply themselves with books, could be persuaded to leave their friends and change their country for one so remote ; and that without a competent provision of books, they could not answer the ends of their mission ; if their lordships the bishops thought fit to assist him in providing parochial libraries for the ministers that should be sent, he would be content to accept the Commissary’s office in Maryland.”

While soliciting in England subscriptions for the libraries abroad, he found himself not unfrequently met by the objection, that we had poor cures and poor clergymen enough in England, who stood in need of a similar provision, and he was thus induced to enlarge his plan and address himself to the formation of parochial libraries also at home. In 1703, he drew public attention to the subject in an essay, showing the incompetent provision in many parishes for enabling the clergy to instruct the people ; and in 1709, he obtained an Act of Parliament for insuring the better preservation of such parochial libraries as he might establish for their use. He devoted himself with indefatigable zeal to this object to the close of a long life, and never lost an opportunity of advancing its claims. A detention at Plymouth, when waiting for a passage to Maryland, was the occasion of recovering a neglected library in that town, and of founding others at Gravesend and Deal, as seaport libraries for naval chaplains and missionaries bound for their posts in the plantations. In his living at Aldgate, he superintended the studies of young missionaries who were

Bray, D.D., formerly minister of St. Botolph without Aldgate, London, to which are added the *Designs* and *Proceedings* of those who now form the Society which he instituted.” The 2nd edition revised. 1808.

about to proceed to the colonies, and he established a probationary library upon the spot for their use. The wants of the laity were not forgotten by him, and in his "*Primordia Bibliothecaria*," he has left a scheme for parochial lending libraries of greater or less extent, and varying in cost from two or three to one hundred pounds. And so successful were his different exertions, that he had the satisfaction of establishing before his death (1730) no less than sixty-seven parochial libraries for the use of the minister of the place, and eighty-three lending catechetical libraries in central localities for loan among the neighbouring clergy. In addition to these, more than fifty libraries were sent out by him into North America, the West Indies, to a factory in Bengal, and to Cape Corso Castle, on the African coast.

In carrying out these designs Dr. Bray was supported (among others) by "the charitable Earl of Thanet," as Dunton calls him, by Lords Weymouth and Digby, Dr. Smalridge, Dr. Bull (whose subscription of 20*l.* may be owing to the solicitation of his former pupil), Mr. Hoare, and Robert Nelson, who assisted in drawing up some rules for the better preservation of the libraries. The loss of the early journals* of the Society deprives us of full details of Nelson's personal share in its operations. The interest which he took in his friend's designs is indicated by some early minutes of the Society for promoting Christian Knowledge; as when he "reports that he has procured thirty volumes of Bishop Sanderfon's sermons for the use of the libraries projected by Dr. Bray in the plantations," or appears upon a committee for establishing lending libraries in Wales, or is "desired to buy books for the two libraries in the dioceses of St. Asaph and Llandaff," or is stated to

* They appear to have been seen by Mr. H. J. Todd, when he published his edition of the "*Life and Designs of Dr. Bray*" in 1808. See Preface, p. viii. But they are not now to be found in the muniment chest of the Aston Intee.

have ordered the works of Petavius for their use. In his "Address to Persons of Quality and Estate," he especially recommends to their charitable consideration "the erecting parochial libraries in the meanly-endowed cures throughout England;" stating* that there were then in England above 2000 parishes where the annual income of the ministers did not exceed 30*l.*, and urging that "the ministers who officiate in churches so meanly endowed, must of necessity be unfurnished with such books as might enable them to administer wholesome and sound doctrine to their flock, either by way of catechising or of preaching." He describes the formation of this Society for supplying the defect, and for establishing parochial libraries to be attached to such cures, for the use of the minister for the time being, and "consisting each of a competent number of the best comments on the Holy Scriptures, and the most approved treatises of practical divinity." And he concludes:†

"Through the blessing of God, and the munificence of several worthy benefactors, this undertaking hath so far prosper'd, that the trustees have already procured near 3000 books in folio, and above 4000 in 4to, and 8vo; which are lodged in repositories for that purpose provided.

"It is proposed by the trustees, that if this design meets with due encouragement, there shall be at least five hundred libraries erected, whereof above fifty are already completed, and sent into several parts of the kingdom: and they do not doubt but that all good men will join with them in their hearty wishes and endeavours, that in process of time, none of the above-mentioned 2000 cures shall want the same advantage.

"There is in like manner a design for erecting some libraries in the Highlands of North-Britain, for the use chiefly of the ministers and candidates; several of whom are said to be persons of excellent parts and capacities, but to

* pp. 169, seqq.

† Ibid, pp. 171-4.

be almost wholly destitute of books, and unprovided with the necessary means of improving themselves. And it is proposed to have one library in each county of the Highlands; the number of which may be afterwards increased, as encouragement shall be given. And there is a design carrying on for Wales, much of the same nature."

7. *The Commission for Building New Churches.*

The public erection of additional churches in London, which had been contemplated by Sancroft, and ineffectually proposed by the prelates of the Revolution, was more immediately owing to the impulse of High-church enthusiasm in Queen Anne's reign. The Tory House of Commons, in 1710, took the initiative* in this great religious work, and upon referring to Committee a petition for church accommodation from Greenwich, made it an instruction to the Committee to "consider what churches are wanting within the cities of London and Westminster, and the suburbs thereof." Upon this encouragement, petitions for new churches poured in from the different parts of the metropolis, from Tilbury, Malden, Kingston, and Gravesend. The Lower House of Convocation hastened to express their pleasure at finding their intentions anticipated by the zeal of the Commons, and returned their "unanimous thanks for such an instance of affectionate regard to the welfare of the Established Church, and the common interests of religion," offering to assist the deliberations of Parliament "by imparting such lights as they were able." The Commons responded to their offer by the respectful resolution, "That this House will, in all matters immediately relating to religion and the welfare of

* See an account of this churchbuilding movement in the Rev. R. Yates' "The Church in Danger," 1815, and his "Basis of National Welfare," 1817, where are copious extracts from the parliamentary papers of the time to which he had access.

the Established Church, have a particular regard to such applications as shall at any time be made to them from the clergy in Convocation assembled, according to the ancient usage, together with the Parliament." No time was lost in preparing an exact statement of the deficiency to be supplied, and on the 10th of March, Convocation presented to Parliament a report, specifying twenty-seven * of the largest parishes in London (with a population of 512,954, and but twenty-eight churches and eighteen tabernacles or chapels of ease), as requiring additional church accommodation. On the 6th of the following month, the Commons' Committee reported upon the accuracy of the calculation; and allowing for as much as one-fifth of the above population to consist of French Protestants and Dissenters (who were accommodated in meeting-houses of their own), they concluded that a church population of 240,500 remained unprovided for; for whom fifty new churches (the House resolved) were required, computing 4750 souls to each church and parish. For the erection of these churches, and for the provision of parsonage-houses and burial-grounds, a supply was voted of 350,000*l.*; a bill passed through both Houses (*nemine contradicente*) for raising the amount by a tax of 2*s.* or 3*s.* a-ton upon all coals brought into the port of London; a Royal Commission was appointed (Sept. 21) for carrying

* The Parishes specified were St. Andrew's Holborn, St. Ann Westminster, St. Botolph Aldgate, St. Botolph Bishopgate, St. Botolph Aldergate, St. Clement's-Danes, Christ Church Surrey, St. Giles' Cripplegate, St. James' Clerkenwell, St. Sepulchre's, St. Giles' in the Fields, St. Martin's in the Fields, St. Mary Magdalen Bermondsey, St. Paul Shadwell, St. John Wapping, St. James' Westminster, St. Leonard's Shoreditch, St. Margaret Westminster, St. Paul Covent Garden, St. George Southwark, St. Olave Southwark, St. Saviour's Southwark, St. Mary Whitechapel, Poplar, Blackwall, Rotherhithe, Deptford; with seven hamlets in Stepney, viz., Ratcliffe, Limehouse, Mile End Old Town and New Town, Wapping, Spitalfields and Bethnal Green. It will be observed that the names of St. Pancras and Marylebone, whose religious deficiencies are of later growth, do not here occur at all; while the spiritual destitution of the East end of town seems to have attracted as much notice as at present.

out the purpose of the Act, and powers given them to divide parishes, to select and purchase sites, to form consolidated districts, to determine what churches should be built, and what chapels should be converted into parish churches.

In the list of Commissioners we find the name of Robert Nelson, and his fellow-labourers in all works of charity, the Lords Thanet and Weymouth, Stanhope, Gastrell and Smalridge, Henry Hoare, and Edward Jennings. The insertion of an avowed nonjuror's name in a Royal Commission is a noticeable tribute to the public character which he now possessed as a promoter of church extension in every shape. To the want of Church accommodation in our large towns his attention had already been called by his friend Hickes, who calculated that above 100 new churches, and as many parish priests, were required within the Bills of Mortality, and suggested, as early as 1705, that the Coal Act of Charles the Second's reign, which was then expiring, might be continued for the purpose.*

The neighbourhood in which Nelson himself resided afforded an instance of new buildings and an increased population outstripping the accommodation of the parish church (that of St. Andrew's, Holborn); and the knights, baronets, and honourable gentlemen who inhabited the newly-erected mansions of Ormond Street and Queen Square, had built a chapel for their own use in 1705. Robert Nelson was from the first (even when a nonjuror) on the Committee of Pewholders in the building, and it was at a meeting of which he was Chairman (Feb. 13, 1712) that an application was made to the new Commissioners for the assignment of a parochial district, which he saw effected in the following year.† The lively interest he took in the national effort for church extension which was now

* Preface to "First Collection of Controversial Letters." 1705. p. 26.

† The chapel, however, was not consecrated and erected into the parish church of St. George the Martyr, Queen Square, till Sept. 26, 1723.

being so nobly schemed, was further evinced by an account of the Commission which he contributed to his friend Chamberlayn's "*Present State of Great Britain*," and by the foremost place he gives to it among his "ways and methods of doing good."* He there laments over the many "parishes where the number of parishioners exceeds ten times the capacity of the church to receive them, and where, consequently, there are many that totally neglect the public worship of God, and are thereby deprived of the means of grace, the feeding of their minds with necessary knowledge, the joining in those united prayers which are offered up by a commissioned officer, and the communicating in the Holy Sacrament of Christ's body and blood. While others, whose minds are more serious, but not grounded in any true principles which fix them to the communion of the Church of England, take up with the next meeting-house where they can be accommodated with room, and are unawares betrayed into the hands of teachers who are destitute of that authority which the Church of England requires in her pastors." He rejoices over the zeal with which measures were taken against the evil. "How this was brought about, even at a time when the nation was involved in a most expensive war, and with what surprising facility it was carried through the Parliament, doth indeed well deserve to be remembered, to the honour of the principal managers and movers in it." He suggests that ground-landlords might be compelled, when they build a certain number of houses, to erect a church to contain the new inhabitants. He points out that this lack of church accommodation is not confined to great towns alone, but that "the churches of many parishes throughout this kingdom, as also in Ireland, are at this time in a very poor and ruinous condition; and in some places many inhabitants

* "*Address to Persons of Quality and Estate*," pp. 105, et seqq.

are obliged to go several miles to enjoy the benefit of public worship." He wishes that my lords the bishops would make an exact survey, and give in a list to Parliament what churches or chapels are wanted, or what are proper to be rebuilt or repaired within their dioceses," with a view to a public provision for the same.

"But till this Christian spirit," he continues, "farther diffuses itself into the legislative power, it is plain that a man of quality hath sufficient means ready at hand to accomplish it; and it will be very proper for him to choose such great towns for the erecting of consecrated places as are in the neighbourhood of his large dominions; so that the bountiful donor of what he enjoys may be constantly adored there, from whence his supplies proceed. And this is the first method which I shall offer of doing good to the souls of men."

At every line in the above the unavailing regret rises in the English Churchman's mind, that a want so sensibly felt in Nelson's day should have been then so inadequately supplied, that the words of advice which he left as a legacy behind him should have fallen with so little effect upon the ears of the worldly generation which succeeded, that the munificent grant of the legislature* should have been wasted by the extravagance of architects and the supineness

* Out of the 49 new churches to be erected and the three chapels to be converted into churches, as finally decided on, the following only were completed; viz., Greenwich; Deptford; St. Mary-le-Strand; St. John Evangelist, Westminster; St. George, Ratcliffe Highway; Christ Church, Spittlefields; St. Ann's, Limehouse, in the parish of Stepney; St. John's, Horseleydown; St. Luke, Old Street; St. George's, Queen Square; St. George's, Bloomsbury; and St. George's Hanover Square. St. Giles and St. Martin's-in-the-Fields were rebuilt in lieu of the erection of additional churches in those parishes; St. Mary Woolnoth, in consideration of its having been imperfectly restored after the Great Fire. Of these churches, a Parliamentary Committee reported (Nov. 19, 1718) that St. John's, Westminster, cost £29,277, that at Deptford £19,367, Limehouse, £19,679, Spittlefields, £19,418, Ratcliffe Highway, £18,557, Greenwich, £18,269, St. Mary-le-Strand, £16,341. The two first, the Committee justly complained, were erected by Mr. Archer, the architect, and one of the Commissioners, without any estimate.

of the Commissioners to whom it was intrusted; and that, in fine, only one-fifth of the fifty churches should have been eventually erected, and an acknowledged evil thus allowed to perpetuate and increase, to an extent which no subsequent public grant or voluntary effort has since been able to retrieve.

Nelson was spared the mortification of mourning over the unworthy issue of the noble scheme from which he had hoped so much. He did not survive to see so much as the first stone laid of the contemplated churches. But the good work engaged his thoughts to the last, and one of his latest labours was to read over a *Treatise** on Church Building, which had been forwarded to him for his approval by one of his many admirers, and which he returned enclosed with an assurance of "the pleasure and satisfaction" it had given him.

8. *Desideranda.*

To our account of the different charitable labours in which Robert Nelson was actively engaged, must be added his own sketch of the further charitable schemes which he was only able to indicate and recommend. The enumeration of them exhibits to advantage the keen and thoughtful appreciation which he had of the social wants of our country and the deficiencies of our Church :†—

"We have not," he urges, "a hospital for the incurable, as they have in some parts abroad; and so several miserable

*"The Rich man's great and indispensable Duty to contribute liberally to the building, rebuilding, repairing, beautifying, and adorning of churches, largely set forth and laid before the Nobility, Gentry, and all other rich persons of whatsoever rank or denomination. Being a discourse perused and approved of by the late most pious Robert Nelson, Esq., as what might be of great use to the public." By Edward Wells, D.D., Rector of Cotesbach, in Leicestershire. 1715.

† "Address to Persons of Quality and Estate," pp. 210, et seqq.

objects, left without all help, and even hope, may perish before their time; several of whom possibly might be recovered, and useful experiments made upon them in medicine, to the great advancement of that faculty. There might be also hospitals for every capital distemper of the body, which would certainly tend exceedingly to promote the same end, in like manner as that of Bethlehem is for lunacy and diseases of the brain; there might be an hospital for the blind and for all diseases of the eyes, another for the stone, a third for gout and rheumatism, a fourth for the dropsy, a fifth for the asthma, a sixth for the consumption, a seventh for the palsy, and some other nervous cases. By which means there might be mighty improvements made in the art of curing, and, with God's blessing, many thousands of lives might be preserved for the good of the publick.

"We have not a house of charity to receive poor exposed infants, whereby many murders and abortions might be prevented, and even the children of honest poor parents, who are not able to provide for them, might be taken care of, both as to soul and body.

"We have not a house to receive such young women as may be convinced of their folly, and converted from a loose course of life, into which they may have been by surprise at first betrayed; and would be glad to have, if they could, a convenience of retirement from temptation, whereby to secure their future estate, and possess here their own soul out of the noise and scandal of the world, by a true Christian discipline; not being wanting, at the same time, to make the necessary provision for their bodies by the labour of their hands; that so they may not be burdensome to the house, but rather helpful.

"We have not houses to receive decayed gentlemen, or those who have but small fortunes, or any who have a mind to retreat for a certain time, where they may have all the advantages of a religious and useful society, without binding themselves to any obligations, which they may afterwards grow weary of.

"We have not houses for the reception of ladies and gentlewomen, beyond boarding schools, in order to their improvement both in knowledge and piety; though there

was some years ago a proposal to ladies* for this end, made by a very ingenious gentlewoman, which was then well approved of by several ladies and others.

"We have no colleges or houses of hospitality for entertaining strangers, which might be made of very great use to the publick.

"We have not colleges for receiving new converts from popery, whom we ought not either presently to trust, nor totally to reject. Now, if there were a college for probationers, in one part of which converts from popery, and in the other converts from schism, were to be first tried and exercised for a certain time before they were admitted and approved, this might be very much both for the honour and the security of the Church of England.

"We have neither school nor hospital for the distressed children called the blackguard.† Many also of the parish children are vagrants, and exposed to a multitude of temptations, by not being kept together in one house, which

* "A Serious Proposal to the Ladies for the Advancement of their True and Greatest Interest. By a Lover of her Sex [Mrs. Astell], 1697." See "Ballard's Lives," p. 446.

† The following "Proposal for a Charity School for Blackguard Boys," shows how completely Robert Nelson anticipated the ragged schools of our own days, and it raises a sigh, that a good work, sketched so long ago by one of the Church's sons, should have been allowed, by her negligence, to have fallen into other hands:

"A Proposal for a Charity-school for the Blackguard Boys.

"Whereas the Charity Schools erected in the several parts of this kingdom have abundantly improved the morals of poor children educated in them to the honour of God and the benefit of the nation. And whereas the children commonly called blackguard boys, are destitute of all manner of provision for instruction, tending either to the good of their souls or bodies, so that they are not only a scandal to the country they live in, but a disgrace to human nature. And whereas a school might be formed under such regulations as would make them more useful in their little stations as well as less wicked and profane.

"We whose names are underwritten, do hereby agree to pay towards setting up of a Charity School in such place as shall be thought most proper for teaching the blackguard boys to read, and instructing them in the knowledge and practice of the Christian religion, as professed and taught in the Church of England, and such other things as are suitable to their condition and capacity."

An estimate follows of the charge of supporting a "Charity School for blackguard boys," who were to be clothed as well as taught; and "if the subscriptions will amount to so much, a half-penny loaf of bread may be allowed to each boy at noon that comes to school seasonably in the morning."

could be done at much less charge to the parish as well as much greater advantage to the poor children.

“There is a want of suffragan bishops, both at home and in the western plantations. The Diocese of Winchester may have three of those suffragans, and Lincoln four, according to an Act of Parliament still in force. There are two-and-twenty suffragan bishops who by that law might be made in England. And four suffragans, at least, should be in America.”

Of the different schemes of usefulness here suggested, there is hardly one, the worth and importance of which has not been confirmed by subsequent experience, or the need of which is not sensibly felt by ourselves. Thus, again, there are few religious wants of our Church more generally recognised than the need of more deeply religious training for our clergy, and the necessity of theological colleges for our candidates for holy orders, and it is thus that Robert Nelson touches upon the deficiency * in 1714 :—

“If the palaces of bishops might become again, as heretofore, the schools of candidates for the holy ministry, how then would religion in general, and our Church in particular, flourish? Some attempts of this nature have been made of late years, but for want of sufficient encouragement, as well as of due regulations for carrying it on, this necessary undertaking hath not hitherto met with all that success which could be wished for. However, a small seminary of this kind hath within these few years been set up in the Isle of Man, under the direction of the good bishop thereof; who made also a proposal some time since to the Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts to educate or prepare four missionaries in his seminary at a very low rate, to be at the command and direction of the said society. And as those should have been educated under the eye of the bishop, who must thence be acquainted with their true character, probably such only would be pre-

* “Address,” pp. 123, et seqq.

sent to that most important service whose qualifications were before sufficiently tried and approved, and such as might be an honour to their holy profession and the mission they are designed for, as faithful and true labourers in that vineyard which falleth to their lot.

“There are some wise and good men of opinion that they who are sent out to such a mission in our plantations abroad should be obliged to study and practise physick and chirurgery, that they may have the better opportunity of doing good to men’s souls whilst they are taking care of their bodies. The bishop’s proposal did not extend so far; but this hath been taken up by others, and much recommended for its apparent usefulness to all mankind.

“But not only for the missionaries, who are called to propagate the Gospel among infidels abroad, but for all other candidates of divinity, it hath been much wished that there were some proper seminaries, where, after an academical education first laid in one or other of our universities, they might not only be fully instructed in the art of preaching, but in all other parts of their duty; and more especially how to perform all the public offices with a becoming gravity and devotion. We have indeed very noble foundations for the encouragement of theological studies; but there seems to be somewhat further yet required, beyond the common method which is taken in the colleges.

“And nothing would be likely to give a greater increase to our holy religion than the foundation of such apostolical seminaries in every diocese, under the immediate direction of the bishop thereof.”*

* In the *Life of Bishop Bull*, he expresses in still stronger terms his sense of the need of such theological colleges, where “candidates for orders might be fully instructed in all that knowledge which that holy institution requires, and in all those duties which are peculiarly incumbent upon a parochial priest. Where lectures might be daily read, which in a certain course of time should include a perfect scheme of divinity; where all particular cases of conscience might be clearly stated, and such general rules laid down as might be able to assist them in giving satisfaction to all those that repair to them for advice in difficult matters. Where they might receive right notions of all those spiritual rights which are appropriated to the priesthood, and which are not in the power of the greatest secular person either to convey or abolish; and yet are of such great importance, that some of them are not only necessary to the well-being, but to the very being of the church. Where they might be taught to

These extracts are taken from "A Representation of the Several Ways and Methods of Doing Good," which Nelson has incorporated into his "Address to Persons of Quality and Estate;" a posthumous work, which appeared in 1715,* under the editorship of his friend Lee, into whose hands, shortly before his last illness, he had entrusted the manuscript for publication.

In this work Nelson endeavoured to enlist the sympathies of the rich and noble, with whom he was in the habit of associating, in behalf of those children of poverty for whom he lived. He urged upon them that something different was required from them than mere liberality; that liberality consists in giving what is their own when they have no obligation to give, and nothing to expect from it; but that charity is a restoring of that proportion of your wealth which does not belong to you, which you are obliged by the commandment of God to distribute to the necessities of others. Do you in earnest believe, he asks, that the Almighty, in heaping such treasure upon you, aimed at

perform all the public offices of religion with a becoming gravity and devotion, and with all that advantage of elocution which is aptest to secure attention and beget devout affection in the congregation. Where they might particularly be directed how to receive clinical confessions, how to make their applications to persons in times of sickness, and have such a method formed to guide their addresses of that nature, that they might never be at a loss when they are called upon to assist sick and dying persons. Where they might be instructed in the art of preaching; whereby I mean not only the best method in composing their sermons, but all those decent gestures and graceful deportment, the influence whereof all hearers can easier feel than express. And where they might have such judicious rules given them for prosecuting their theological studies as would be of great use to them in their future conduct. But above all, where they might be formed by constant practice and by the example of their superiors, to piety and devotion, to humility and charity, to mortification and self-denial, to contentedness and submission to the will of God in all conditions of human life; and more especially excited to great zeal in promoting the salvation of souls, which is the true spring of all that industry and application which is required in the clerical function."

* "An Address to Persons of Quality and Estate, by Robert Nelson, Esq., to which is added an appendix of some original and valuable papers. 1715." It was reprinted at Dublin, with suitable adaptations to the locality, in 1752.

nothing but to make you rich and great? He meant the rich to be fathers to the poor, and the poor to look up to them as to parents. He means the fortunes of the rich to be reservoirs of charity, from which perpetual streams of kindness should issue on all around. They are as much meant to give as the clouds to rain, or the sun to shine. God has lodged the portion of the poor in the hands of the rich; and, if you consume all you have upon yourselves, you are guilty both of disobedience and of injustice. You use your wealth contrary to the intention of God, who is the absolute master of it, and has intrusted you to dispense it; you use it contrary to the right of the poor, who have a just title to a share of those good things which you possess.

“All the ancient Fathers,” he continues, “who are wise instructors in matters of piety, as well as the best witnesses to necessary truth, agree in this notion; that after we have satisfied our necessities, and supplied our reasonable occasions, we should employ the rest for the relief of our poor neighbours. And there is no point whereupon they have so often and clearly explained themselves. Not to bestow our superfluities upon the poor, St. Augustin asserts, is a manifest retaining the goods of our neighbour. St. Basil says, that we commit as many robberies, as we refuse occasions of relieving the necessitous from our superfluities. Do you know what crime you render yourselves guilty of, you that are rich, when you deny the poor necessary food? The same crime, says St. Ambrose, as if you snatched out of his hands the little bread he hath wherewith to support his life. All the fathers say so exactly the same thing, that there is but little difference in their manner of expressing it. So that it is the hungry man’s bread you lock up in your own chests; it is his food you consume in riot and gluttony; it is the naked man’s clothing you wear in the extravagances of your apparel; and it is the prisoner’s liberty that you throw away at your excessive gaming and deep play.”

On the other hand he assures them, that “if doing good were attended with no other advantage than the pleasure that results from such actions, surely that is sufficient to make you in love with it. What a pleasure is there,” he exclaims, with a warmth that was evidently kindled by a remembrance of the happy moments he had thus himself received :

“What a pleasure is there, to enter into a family as an angel of peace, and to leave those in acts of praise and thankfulness, whom we found plunged in mourning and desolation? What pleasure to go about sowing joy in the minds of men, strewing everywhere quiet and serenity, changing the conditions of men, making happy ones, and working miracles? Is it possible that there should be any so foolish as to choose rather to see their coffers full of dirt and earth, than to be fathers of the poor, instruments of Providence, visible gods, as it were, of this world, loved, blessed, and almost adored, by men?”

And he sets before them the eternal rewards which will follow upon this present pleasure, and the opportunities which the rich and great possess of procuring the most exalted places in heaven by devoting themselves here to a life of beneficence and religion.

“If there are crowns,” he says, “for an obscure and despised humility; for the contempt of the world in a mean condition; for that justice, which hath been joined with an incapacity of doing much mischief; for that meekness, which hath been deprived of the surest means of resentment; for that innocence, which hath always been kept at a distance from temptations: what thrones are there not prepared for those heroick virtues, which have increased in the midst of the most corrupted courts? What exaltation shall not that humility receive, that hath continually grown under honour and preferment? What a glorious kingdom shall not that poverty of spirit be possessed of, which hath

been able to preserve itself under great plenty and abundance? What comfort shall not be administered to them, who have been mourners, when the joys and delights of the world have been always at their command; who have abstained from pleasures when all sorts of pleasure seemed to court them? What a blessed vision shall not the pure in heart be eternally entertained with, who have preserved their chastity inviolable in the midst of an infectious air? What durable riches shall not be conferred upon those who have dispersed and given to the poor, when it was in their power to have consumed it in luxury and magnificence?

“Blessed are you rich, who shall be found without blemish, who have not gone after gold. Happy, infinitely happy will you be, who have always put your trust and confidence in the Lord: whose hearts have not been corrupted by your great treasures; whose minds have not become vain and foolish from your birth and titles; who have led a virtuous and pious life in the midst of a wicked and depraved world: who, having in your power an absolute liberty to do every thing, have always kept yourselves within the narrow bounds of God’s laws; and when you might have done what you would, did nothing but what you ought; who, having it in your power to do evil, exercised yourselves only in good works.”

CHAPTER IV.

ROBERT NELSON'S DEVOTIONAL WRITINGS.

- (1). *The Practice of True Devotion*, 1698.—Quotations.—(2). *Exhortation to Housekeepers*, 1702.—Extract.—(3). *Companion to the Festivals and Fasts*, 1704.—Similar works by previous and subsequent writers.—Its extraordinary popularity. Prized by Bonwicke and others.—Abstract of Subjects.—Quotations.—Observance of Holydays in Nelson's time.—(4). *The Christian Sacrifice*, 1706.—Nelson's opinion of Frequent Communion.—Practice of Bonnell and others.—Celebrations at the London Churches.—Nelson's doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice, taught by Lake, Ken, Bull, Beveridge, and others.—Attacked by Trimmell and others.—(5) Instructions for Confirmation.

To the preceding enumeration of those "ways and methods of doing good," to which Robert Nelson devoted his life, and by which he endeared himself to his contemporaries, his biographer must add a special and separate notice of those devotional writings which have made his name a household word to many, whom the record of his personal charities has never reached, and by which he still continues to be doing good, and sowing the seeds of true devotion and sound doctrine in our Church.

1. The earliest of these devotional works was his "*Practice of True Devotion*,"* which was published anonymously in 1698. In consequence, possibly, of thus wanting the advantage of his name, it failed to attract popular attention as quickly as his other publications, and did not reach a second edition till the year after his death, in 1715, when

* "*The Practice of True Devotion in relation to the end as well as to the means of Religion; with an office for the Holy Communion.*" Nichols' "*Lit. Anecd.*," vol. iv. p. 193, and "*Anecdotes of Bowyer*," p. 3, gives 1698 as the date of the first edition. The Preface has a later date (Aug. 23, 1708), and must have been subsequently added.

it began to take its place in public esteem, being reprinted as often as twenty times by the commencement of the present century. It is full as worthy of its author as any of his later writings; and indeed the very nature of its object, together with the earnestness, kindliness, and good sense with which that subject is treated, render it a still truer embodiment than they are of his own personal character in religion. The Preface is characteristic of one who took shelter from the violence of party strife in the practice of piety and charity.

“The present divided state of Christianity is so melancholy a consideration to all pious and good men, who thoroughly apprehend the dreadful consequences of it, that they do not more frequently lament, than they do most fervently beg of God a sovereign remedy for those unhappy divisions that prevail in the world; and labour as earnestly in their several stations to suggest such methods as may prove most effectual to preserve the unity of the faith, and may have the greatest tendency to reconcile the minds of men to one another.

“It is but too manifest, that among the many visible ill effects of parties, we may reasonably reckon, as a very considerable one, the great decay of the spirit and life of devotion; for while men are so deeply concerned for their several schemes, and pursue them with the vigour of their minds, and the bent of their affections, the solid and substantial part of religion is apt to evaporate; and charity, the very bond of peace, and of all virtues, without which whosoever liveth is counted dead before God, is but too frequently made a sacrifice to those differences that divide us.”

It was to put some check upon what he felt to be a growing evil of the day, that Nelson drew up this invaluable manual of practical religion. He commences, like William Law in his “*Serious Call*,” by stating the nature of true devotion. He owns that “in discourse we

generally understand by a devout man, one who prays often with all the appearances of a serious and religious mind; and the frequent exercise of the means of grace, especially prayer, seems to have engrossed the character of devotion." But he insists that true devotion is not so much the performance of any one duty, "as it is the way and manner of performing all the instances of our duty; that it consists in a constant and ready cheerfulness of mind in doing the will of God, however manifested to us: for this shows we are devoted to his service. It is an earnestness of soul to be entirely conformed in everything to the divine pleasure; so that the covetous do not more eagerly long for wealth, the ambitious for honour, and the epicure for pleasure, than the devout soul does to live in all the commandments of the Lord blameless." He proceeds to offer rules for the attainment and preservation of this religious spirit. It is within the reach of all. Christian perfection, he urges, is not to be attained only by retirement and contemplation, and by abstracting ourselves from the world. It consists in the right performance of such actions as occur every day. Even the public functions of the ministry give no advantage in this respect to those who are occupied by them.

"The difference between the goodness of one man and another, does not so much depend upon the nature of that employment which is made his profession, as upon that temper of mind with which he governs it. The priest at the altar may be rejected by God through his ambition and covetousness; when the tradesman in his shop may sanctify his business by justice and charity."

The practices of piety are to be valued only as they are calculated to produce this inward devotion of heart, "so that it is not he that says the most prayers, and comes the most frequently to the Altar, that is the most holy and

sanctified person ; but he that is most like to God, and abounds most with the fruits of the spirit."

Obedience to the commandments of God is true devotion to his service, and "thus praying always, and praying without ceasing, is by some understood to consist in governing all our actions by the rule of our duty, keeping our minds always in a fit disposition to pray. And when the sun and moon, the light and stars are called upon to praise the Lord, it is by observing their regular course and constantly performing those offices that were laid upon them in the beginning of the creation. In like manner, whoever discharges well the duties of his station, and exactly performs the obligations of his profession, may be said to pray continually, and praise the Lord."

Thus under the Practice of True Devotion, Nelson is able to include the duties of ordinary life, as well as the outward observances of religion, and his book continues to this day as complete and useful a manual of practical religion as any which our Church possesses, and as suitable a guide for well-disposed and well-instructed youth as could be put into their hands. The following quotations may serve as further specimens of Nelson's style and matter in this his earliest devotional work ; they will evince his thoughtful study of human nature, and justify the reputation which this book has so long enjoyed.

Little Annoyances.—"Never excuse yourself from mortification, by saying, that the occasion that offers for it is inconsiderable : if it is a little thing, it will cost you the less pains ; but the consequence is important : because in these little things you always assert the empire over your passions ; from whence it will follow, that in matters of the greatest moment you will be master of yourself, and no passion will be able to prevail against you."

"The rigour of the seasons, cold, heat, hunger, thirst, ill weather, sickness, wounds, victuals ill dressed, a bed ill

made, a disagreeable smell, the stinging of a bee, and a thousand other little accidents that happen to us, give us a fair opportunity to promote our salvation, if we suffer them patiently without complaining."

Personal Antipathies.—"As some certain persons please us by a sort of sympathy, we know not why; so others displease us by a sort of antipathy which we can give no account of. It is somewhat difficult entirely to conquer these aversions, because sometimes they proceed from nature and constitution: but we may prevent the outward appearance of it, by suppressing all contemptuous and reproachful language.

"Antipathy thus governed may be compared to a wild beast chained: as long as you keep it confined it is not able to do any hurt; but if you once let it loose it is incredible what mischief it will do to yourself and everybody else. As long as you give no outward testimonies of your aversion, it will be attended with no ill consequence, provided you do not please yourself with such thoughts, but rather endeavour to suppress the irregular motions they may occasion; but if once you give way to your antipathy by doing everything which that dictates, in a little time you will contract a great deal of guilt. Therefore bear with patience whatever is shocking to you in other people."

Anger.—"Never say anything in a passion. Let the smoke fly off, let the troubled water settle, and then you will be able to discover what reason requires from you, when the storm of passion is quieted.

"Let me farther give you a little hint upon this subject. I find several are able to moderate themselves when they are provoked to anger, and can govern their resentment at the time when they are offended; but some time after they apply themselves to their friends and intimates to relate to them the bad treatment they have received; and under the pretence of asking advice, and of seeking comfort, they will make a long narration of the injuries they have received. Now to what purpose is all this discourse, and what does it serve for, but to renew their resentment, which was almost

appeased; and to rekindle their anger, which was almost extinguished?"

Humility.—"There are some who appear humble, and who give way to others, but at the same time are very glad that others should take notice of it; if they put up with an affront, or bear patiently any reflection, they are desirous of being applauded. 'I know,' say they, 'what you have said against me, but I will think no more of it, since it is a man's duty to bear contempt for the love of God.' Another will come and relate the pains he has taken upon an occasion of practising his duty, the humiliation and mortification he has suffered. The best part of this virtue is lost when we desire to make it known to others, when we acquaint them with what we know others say and do against us. True humility consists in suffering of humiliation and mortification, without desiring that any one should know we suffer it."

The practice of Virtue.—"It is by writing, that one learns to write; it is by painting and drawing, that one learns to draw and paint; and it is by practising virtue, that one learns it and grows perfect in it. Ask a virtue of God never so long, reflect upon it never so seriously, read all the books that treat of it, and hear the most excellent preachers that recommend it, set the best examples of it before your eyes, and make the firmest resolutions to attain it; yet if you never really practise it, nor exercise yourself in it, you shall never be master of it. Set therefore immediately about this method; for it is in humbling yourself, that you become humble. It is in making frequent acts of the love of God, that you become enamoured with him; it is by patient suffering, without repining, that you learn patience; and it is by denying yourself, that you become mortified to the things of this world."

2. The next in order of Nelson's devotional writings was an Exhortation upon the Duty of Family Prayer;* a subject on which he lost no opportunity of insisting, sub-

* "An earnest Exhortation to Housekeepers to set up the Worship of God in their Families. With daily Prayers for Morning and Evening. The second

joining prayers for families to each of his larger works, and in this little tract pressing the obligation upon parents in humble life. It was early taken upon the list of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, and distributed gratuitously to their correspondents, and it reached as many as twelve editions in the fifty years that succeeded its publication. It is now, however, of such unfrequent occurrence, that a quotation from it may here be acceptable, as a sample of the simple and familiar language in which Nelson could address the uneducated poor:—

“Let it be your care that your children be taught to read, and then to learn the Church Catechism, with some short prayers for morning and evening, which you must oblige them constantly to use. Be very severe with them if they tell lies, or betake themselves to pilfering tricks, or lightly use the name of God, especially if they swear by that sacred name, or offend against modesty by any filthy or obscene words or actions. Your authority ought to influence and restrain them till their reason can discover the advantages of piety, and the folly and ingratitude of sinning against God, and breaking His holy commandments. Indulgence in these cases may be of fatal consequence, for by letting the reins of government hang loose, children will abandon themselves to the conduct of their passions, which they are most inclined to follow, and you will quickly repent that fondness which, by dear-bought experience, will be found to have ruined your children. Never omit carrying them with you to church on the Lord’s Day, and see that they behave themselves reverently at the public worship.

“But what I chiefly designed to recommend to you at

edition 1702.” The first edition I have not seen. It is thus referred to in the Minutes of the S.P.C.K. “1702. April 16. Ordered that Dr. Woodward’s two pieces on Confirmation, and another little tract about Family Prayer, be added to the ordinary packets which are sent to the correspondents. July 23. Ordered, that 500 Serious Exhortations to Housekeepers be delivered to the agents (of schools), together with two Pastoral Letters to be distributed according to their discretion.”

present was, to set up the worship of God in your families, by the constant performing of morning and evening prayer, and by reading a Psalm and chapter in the New Testament before you begin that holy exercise. This will be the best means to preserve a sense and spirit of religion in your families; by this method they will be constantly put in mind of their duty; for the matter of it is contained in such prayers, and what we ask of God we are obliged to use our utmost endeavours to obtain. And upon this condition God promises the influences of His grace, which, provided we do our best, will always be ready to assist and strengthen us in the doing and suffering His holy will.

“If you, or any one in the family can read, let him or her take the Bible, and gravely read a Psalm and chapter in the New Testament, and then distinctly and reverently on your knees, offer up the following prayer to Almighty God. And whatever objections you may have as to your worldly affairs in a morning, I am sure in the evening you have leisure enough for this purpose. Let your children get by heart the two prayers that are added for them, and stand by them sometimes, that they may learn to pray seriously and devoutly. When they are of a fit age, go with them to your minister, and desire him to prepare them for Confirmation, and afterwards to receive the Blessed Sacrament.”

Then follow Family Devotions for morning and evening, with private prayers for children and servants.

3. Nelson's palmary work on the Festivals and Fasts of the Church * appeared in 1703, the preface bearing the date of All Saints' Day in that year. The plan of it had been schemed ten years before, in concert with his friend Kettlewell, and it had had the advantage of the friendly revision of Brokesby and of Lee. To his worthy friend, Dr.

* “A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England, with Collects and Prayers for each Solemnity. 1704.” In 1707 appeared the “Fourth edition; with additions;” these additions comprising the marginal notes, and the chapters for Easter Monday and Tuesday, and Whit Monday and Tuesday.

Cave, he also confesses himself indebted for the historical particulars which he has given; and a comparison of Nelson's "Festivals" with Dr. Cave's "Lives of the Apostles and Evangelists," will exhibit a very large amount of verbal coincidence, and show the great extent of Nelson's obligations to his friend. To Nelson belongs the merit of careful and judicious execution, rather than of learned research or of original conception in his work. The idea of compiling a popular body of divinity by way of commentary on the Festivals and Fasts of the Christian year, had already been carried out, with some acceptance, by two divines of our church,* and a contemporary of Nelson was engaged at the same time as himself, upon a similar performance.† But the judicious and careful execution of Nelson's book, together with the advantage of his personal character and position, won for it so instantaneous and so enduring a popularity, as altogether to eclipse any previous or contemporary effort. The clergy of the day hailed their lay ally with enthusiasm, and zealously circulated a defence of their order and their church from a quarter that was above the world's suspicions. His associates at the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge lost no opportunity of putting forward the production of one of the most honoured of their members. And if poor clergymen were to be selected for a suitable present; if a

* "The Holy Feasts and Fasts of the Church, with meditations and prayers, by W. Brough, D.D. 1657."

"Θυσιαστήριον, five Scintilla Altaris. Primitive Devotion in the Feasts and Fasts of the Church of England, by Ed. Sparkes, D.D. 6th edition. 1678."

† "Historia Sacra, or the Holy History; giving an exact and comprehensive account of all the Feasts and Fasts of the Church of England, with their etymologies and appellations, and the true grounds and reasons of their celebrations. Together with practical observations upon the several days and prayers concluding each distinct head. 1705." The book reached a 2nd. ed. 1720, 3rd, 1732. "As to Mr. Nelson's Treatise on this subject," writes the author, "I had almost finished mine before that appeared in the world, and, therefore, I have not enriched myself from that store with any one observation that I have not made before."

schoolmistress at Nayland was to be rewarded for her exemplary conduct ; if Mr. Ostervald, the pastor of Neufchatel, was to be encouraged in his design of making a nearer approach to the doctrine and discipline of the English Church ; if a merchant was to be complimented for " his favour in transmitting the books of the Society beyond the seas," or a missionary was to be furnished for his station ;—nothing formed so appropriate and acceptable a gift as " Mr. Nelson's Book on the Festivals and Fasts." It had not been published a couple of months, before the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel ordered it,* together with Mr. Ostervald's Catechism, to be given to all their missionaries. It united in its favour the suffrages of contending theologies ; and was commended by Mrs. Burnet (in her " Devotions,") as much as by Dr. Hickes. Ambrose Bonwicke, at college, prepared himself for his dissolution by the reflections and prayers for Easter Eve, and the youthful nonjuror was found dead in his chamber with " his Nelson" beside him.† The worthy and pious Thoresby, a convert from the nonconformists, and retaining to the last much of puritan feeling, yet made it his constant manual of devotion,‡ as each sacred season of the Church returned. When visiting the well-known Lady Elizabeth Hastings, he found that religious and charitable lady employing it at

* Minute of S.P.G. Feb. 4, 170½

† " Pattern for young Students in the University set forth in the Life of Mr. Ambrose Bonwicke. 1729."

‡ " The Diary of Ralph Thoresby," vol. ii., p. 53, " Concluded the pious Mr. Nelson's most excellent treatise of the Feasts and Fasts of the Church, with which I have been often much affected, and might have been still more, if I could come nearer to the pattern set by the exemplary author who presented this to me." P. 350, " Mr. Hole, by my lady's appointment, read our late friend Mr. Nelson of the Festivals, to instruct the servants as to the Epiphany, then a chapter as usually before family prayers ; after which all retired to their private devotions, blessed be God for such exemplars." P. 406, April 5. Die Dom, " Morning, read Burkitt, and Nelson in the Festivals for Easter-day, having on the preceding days read those in the Fasts for Good Friday and Easter Eve. Evening, read Nelson."

family prayer for the instruction of her servants. Clergymen were not above adopting it for their personal edification, and Dr. Assteton, the faithful pastor of Beckenham, as his biographer informs us,* “primitively celebrated our religious Feasts and Fasts according to the rules of that truly pious, charitable, and learned gentleman, Robert Nelson, Esq., in his excellent book thereupon.” So largely was it circulated among every class, that in four years and a half more than 10,000 copies were printed. Two different translations were made of it into German; and Mr. Williams, Lord Berkeley’s chaplain, translated it into Welsh. Nelson saw it pass through as many as eight editions in his lifetime, and he was able to value the copy-right of it at no less than 500*l.* at his death. The work experienced no diminution of popularity after his decease, and no fewer than twenty-eight editions of it were called for before the conclusion of the century. The different attempts† to abridge and improve upon it, and adapt it

* “The Christian indeed and faithful Pastor impartially represented in the Life and Works of the late eminent William Assteton, D.D., Rector of Beckenham, in Kent.” 1714. p. 159.

† I have met with the following:—

“Mr. Nelson’s Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England abridged. Together with a short explanation of the morning and evening service in the Book of Common Prayer. In 12 Catechetical exercises written for the use of St. Bride’s Charity School, and published for the instruction of the charity children of London and Westminster. By a late eminent Divine. 1739.”

“A New Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England, with devotions proper to each solemnity. By G. Nallson, Esq., London. 1767.”

“A New Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England, with devotions proper to each solemnity. Revised and corrected by Leo. Howard, D.D., chaplain to H.R.H. the Princess Dowager of Wales, and the author of the Royal Bible. Dublin, 1774.” 2nd ed. 1814.

“The Christian’s Companion to the Feasts and Fasts of the Church of England, containing an account of each solemnity; with considerations, the collect and a prayer for the day. London, 1795.”

“Nelson’s Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England, with collects and prayers for each solemnity; abridged, with notes, by John Poynder, Esq., from the original in the Catechetical form by Robert Nelson, Esq., both lay members of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. 1809.”

to later tastes, are so many testimonies to its acknowledged reputation, and to the sterling worth of its contents; while their failure to supplant it in popular esteem, forms an additional evidence of the judiciousness with which it is compiled.

This treatise forms, in short, a complete popular manual of Anglican theology. In addition to the topics which would be more obviously suggested by the title of the work, we find our author here explaining the necessity and nature of revelation, the external evidence of Christianity from the prophecies of the Old Testament and from the miracles of our Lord (which last are vindicated from infidel objections), and the internal evidence as displayed in the consistency of its doctrines and the excellence of its precepts; the use of reason in religion, as discovering the principles of natural religion, and trying the evidence of that which is revealed; the inspiration of Holy Scripture and the authority of the Church in its interpretation; the mystery of the Trinity in Unity, the union of two natures in Christ, the divinity and the sanctifying operations of the Holy Spirit; the vicarious sacrifice of our Redeemer; the grace of holy baptism, the eucharistic sacrifice, the authority and benefit of confirmation, and the threefold ministry of the church as transmitted from the times of the Apostles. He teaches the intermediate state of the soul between the hour of death and of resurrection; he replies at length to various objections against the resurrection of the body; he states the argument for the immortality of the soul, glancing at his friend Dodwell's heterodox opinion of its natural mortality, and at Whiston's erroneous explanation of the "sleep" of death, a phrase in Scripture, which refers, Nelson says, to the body and not to the soul; he insists on the spiritual benefits of union with Christ through his Church, and the consequent guilt of schism, or causeless separation

from its communion. Among more practical subjects, he treats of the efficacy of prayer, the indispensable duty of family devotion, and the obligation of attending (if possible) the daily service of the church ; the nature of repentance ; the duty of reading Holy Scripture, which he vindicates against the restrictions of the Romish Church ; the practice of self-examination and religious meditation ; the reverence due to holy places ; the duties of sickness, and the danger of a deathbed repentance ; the obligation of rebuking sin, and the virtues of humility and self-denial.

The arguments by which he supports each point of doctrine are generally obvious and solid, and his practical reflections are just and useful. The most prominent defect in this (as in Nelson's other writings) is an entire absence of imagination, so that his "Companion" forms a very prosaic "Christian Year ;" and the devotions at the close of each chapter (except when they are borrowed from his friends Ken, Kettlewell, or Hickes) must be acknowledged to be very tame and cold, and to want entirely that sharpness of ejaculation which is the characteristic of earnest prayer. But his rounded style and careful periods, unfitted as they are for the language of devotion, yet always cover solid sense, and are not ill suited for a manual of formal instruction, such as he designed in his "Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England."

The following quotations may be allowed in illustration of the style and matter of this once popular and influential volume, which at the present time, it is to be feared, is more known by reputation than by actual use, but which is better calculated than any other work we possess to become a recognised manual of religious instruction for our middle classes.

*On the Resurrection of the Body.—From the chapter for
Tuesday in Easter-week.*

“ Q. What are we to believe concerning the resurrection of the body ?

“ A. We are to believe, as a necessary and infallible truth, that as it is appointed for all men once to die, so it is also determined that all men should rise from death; that their bodies, committed to the grave, and dissolved into dust, or scattered into ashes, shall at the last day be re-collected, and be re-united to their souls; that the same bodies that lived before shall be revived; that this resurrection shall be universal, the just to enjoy everlasting life, and the wicked to be condemned to everlasting punishment.

“ Q. Why ought we to establish ourselves in the belief of the resurrection of the body ?

“ A. Because it is one of the great articles of the Christian faith, though the heathens of old, and the infidels of latter times, make it one of their great objections against Christianity, upon the pretence of the impossibility of the doctrine; which, if true, had made it highly unreasonable to have been proposed to the belief of Christians. But this article is not only possible, but highly probable to reason, and upon Christian principles infallibly certain.

“ Q. What evidence doth right reason afford us for the possibility of the resurrection of the body ?

“ A. The proof of the necessary existence of an infinite perfect being, arises chiefly from those visible effects of his wisdom and power and goodness, which we see in the frame of the universe; from whence it follows, that God made the world, and gave to all creatures life and breath; which makes it evident to reason that he who can do the greater, can undoubtedly do the less; it being plainly altogether as easy for God to raise the body again after death as to create and form it at first; it being a less effect of power to raise a body when resolved into dust, than to make all things out of nothing.

“ Q. But is it not impossible to rally the same parts of a body, after they are mouldered into dust, and have under-

gone a variety of changes, and by infinite accidents have been scattered up and down in the world?

“*A.* It is true, the heathens objected this against the primitive Christians; and in order, as they thought, to disabuse them and disappoint them, they burnt the bodies of the martyrs, and scattered their ashes in the air to be blown about by the wind: but the weakness of this objection appears from the false foundation it is grounded upon, it wholly depending upon a mistake of the nature of God and his providence, as if it did not extend to the smallest things, as if God did not know all things he had made, and had them not always in his view, and perfectly under his command; whereas infinite knowledge understands the most minute things, and infinite power can order them as he pleases.

“*Q.* But how can bodies, that have been devoured by cannibals, who chiefly live on human flesh, or bodies eaten up by fishes, and turned to their nourishment, and then those fishes perhaps eaten up by other men, and converted into the substance of their bodies, how should both these, at the resurrection, recover their own body?

“*A.* In order to satisfy this objection it must be considered that the body of man is not a constant and permanent, but a successive thing, which is continually spending and renewing itself, losing something of the matter it had before, and gaining new; so that it is undeniably certain from experience that men frequently change their bodies, and that the body a man hath at any time of his life is as much his own body as that which he hath at his death. So that if the very matter of the body, which a man had at any time of his life, be raised, it is as much his own and the same body as that which he had at his death; which does clearly solve the forementioned difficulty, since any of those bodies he had at any time before he was eaten, is every whit as good, and as much his own, as that which was eaten. It hath been moreover observed, that scarce the hundredth part of what we eat is digested into the substance of our bodies, that all the rest is rendered back again into the common mass of matter by sensible or insensible evacuations; therefore what should hinder an Omnipotent Power from

raising the body a cannibal hath devoured out of the ninety-nine parts which return into the common mass of matter? Others, to answer this difficulty, think it not improbable that the original stamina, which contain all and every one of the solid parts and vessels of the body, even the minutest nerves and fibres, are themselves the entire body; and that all the extraneous matter which, coming in by way of nourishment, fills up and extends the minute and insensible vessels, of which all the visible and sensible vessels are composed, is not strictly and properly part of the body; and that consequently while all this extraneous matter, which serves only to swell the body to its just magnitude, is in continual flux, the original stamina may remain unchanged, and so no confusion of bodies will be possible in nature. They have farther supposed, otherwise to solve the difficulty, that in like manner as in every grain of corn there is contained a minute insensible seminal principle, which is itself the entire future blade and ear, and in due season, when all the rest of the grain is corrupted, unfolds itself visibly into the form; so our present mortal and corruptible body may be but the *exuviae*, as it were; of some hidden and at present insensible principle, which at the resurrection shall discover itself in its proper form, by which way also there can be no confusion of bodies possible in nature. And it is not without some weight that St. Paul made use of the same comparison, and that the ancient fathers of the Church have alledged the same similitude."

On humility.—From the Chapter for the Purification.

"Q. Wherein consists the exercise of humility?

"A. In avoiding to publish our own praises, or to beg the praises of others by giving them a handle to commend us. In not placing too much pleasure and satisfaction in hearing the good things that are said of us, because they are often rather the effect of civility and charity than what we deserve. In doing nothing on purpose to draw the eyes and good opinion of men, but purely to please God. In bearing the reproaches, the injuries, and the affronts of bad men with patience and meekness; the reproofs of our

friends with thankfulness. In not contemning others, though inferior to us in some advantages of body or mind, but being ready to give them that honour and praise they justly deserve. In pitying and compassionating the sins and follies of our fellow Christians, it being the effect of God's grace that we are not overcome by the same temptations. In carrying ourselves with great respect to our superiors, with courtesy and affability to our inferiors, and submitting to the lowest offices for the service of our neighbour. In receiving from the hands of God all afflictions and trials with entire resignation and submission, as offenders under the hand of justice."

On religious differences.—From the Chapter for St. Barnabas' Day.

"Q. How ought religious differences to be debated among Christians?

"A. With a greater regard to the discovery of truth, than to the establishing a reputation for learning and knowledge. Without throwing scorn and contempt upon those that oppose us; because, if they are under the power of error, they are objects of Christian compassion, and are made unfit to receive the impression of good arguments, by being prejudiced and provoked by ill treatment. Without railing and injurious reflections, which no way concern the cause, and which are by good manners banished conversation, and therefore are indecent to be used in writing. Without detracting from the real worth of our adversaries, and charging them with believing consequences which we know they abhor. Without ever suffering our passions to vent themselves under a pretence of zeal for God's glory, but to give an account of our faith, with that meekness that governs the unreasonable fallies of anger, and with that fear which makes us cautious not to transgress those rules of charity which we are obliged to observe towards our neighbour."

4. Nelson's last devotional composition was his "Chri-

tian Sacrifice," which appeared in 1706,* and in which he gives an expanded view of the doctrine and duty of the Holy Communion, upon the principles which he had previously indicated in his "True Devotion," and his "Companion to the Festivals and Fasts." This long-popular manual contains a persuasive to frequent communion, an exposition of the primitive doctrines of the Eucharist, and a collection of private devotions, to be used during the celebration of the Sacrament.

"They that are acquainted," he writes, "with ecclesiastical history, know very well, that the Eucharist, in the purest ages of the Church, made a part of their daily public service; and when the devotion of Christians began to decline, they yet always upon the Lord's Day celebrated the Christian Sacrifice. Our second service at the altar seems defective without a conformable practice to antiquity in this point; and the holy exercises of the Lord's Day appear to want their due perfection without these Eucharistical devotions. To this purpose our Church has encouraged a constant weekly communion, by permitting it to be celebrated where *three or four persons are ready and willing to communicate*; as being assured by our Saviour, that *where two or three are gathered together in his name, there he is himself in the midst of them*. And if the parochial minister should begin with such a small number, it is likely they would quickly increase, at least it will demonstrate his own zeal to show forth the Lord's death, and may bring a blessing upon his parish, as well as upon the other labours of his holy function.

In order to quicken the establishing of this primitive devotion, I cannot forbear suggesting an observation made by several of the reverend clergy who have been zealous in this matter, viz., That where communions have been

* "The great Duty of frequenting the Christian Sacrifice, and the nature of the Preparation required; with suitable devotions, partly collected from the ancient liturgies. 1706." This edition ends with the Acts of Humility. The Acts of Contrition and of Praise, with the concluding devotions, were added by Nelson in subsequent editions.

frequent, the number of the communicants hath sensibly increased, which, I think, ought to be no small encouragement to have the holy mysteries celebrated in all parish churches on every Lord's Day ; because this shows a great disposition in the laity to be brought to a sense of their duty, and consequently, must animate the zeal of their pastors to give them such frequent opportunities of commemorating the death and passion of our blessed Saviour.

“ To this holy end and purpose, I have endeavoured, by proper arguments to press the duty of frequent communion upon the consciences of men ; for all those motives that persuade us to communicate at all, ought to prevail upon us to do it often ; and it appears to me very plain that no sincere Christian, not otherwise lawfully hindered, can justify going out of the church when the Christian Sacrifice is celebrated ; nor is there any pretence or excuse sufficiently valid for a man that is in earnest with religion, to turn his back upon the Holy Table, when the heavenly banquet is there prepared.”

These sentiments were shared by very many of the devout Churchmen of Nelson's time. The exemplary James Bonnell (his biographer informs us)* “ had such longing desires after that sacred memorial of our Saviour's love, that he could not allow himself to want it, whenever it might be had ; so that at last he received every Lord's Day.” Sir Edmund Turner, we are told,† “ partook of the Holy Sacrament, where he had opportunities (as he always had in town and at his own seat) every Lord's Day, and of late every holy day also ; and for this great duty he kept himself in a constant state of preparation by his very frequent devotions, serious meditations, and generally weekly fastings on the days before.” The Lady Elizabeth Hastings, when incapacitated by illness from attending the

* “ The Exemplary Life and Character of James Bonnell, Esq., by Wm. Hamilton, M.A. 1718.” p. 163.

† Bishop Mant's “ *Feriz Anniversariæ*.” p. 232.

public services of the Church, as she had been used,* “had the daily service read, and the holy communion administered to her every Lord’s Day, in her house.” Archbishop Sharp made it a practice to receive every Lord’s Day, and when the Sunday found him upon a journey, he would request the minister of the place where he chanced to be, to celebrate it that day for his sake.† Dr. Dennis Granville, Dean of Durham, exerted himself to restore the weekly sacrament in the cathedral, before his deprivation.‡ Beveridge revived the weekly communion at the church of St. Peter’s, Cornhill, and earnestly recommended it in his writings. “I never expect,” he says, “to see our Church settled, primitive antiquity revived, and true piety and virtue flourish again among us, till the holy communion be oftener celebrated than it hath been of late in all places of the kingdom, and am sure that if people were but sensible of the great advantage it would be to them, they would need no other argument to persuade them to frequent it as often as they can.” In fifteen § other churches and chapels of the metropolis, this means of grace was as frequently dispensed. At the chapel which Nelson frequented in Ormond Street, the Holy Communion was administered “every Sunday, as well as on Good

* Bishop Mant’s “*Ferix Anniversarix*,” p. 311.

† “*Life of Sharp*,” vol. ii. 76, 7.

‡ “*Memoir of Sir Geo. Wheeler*” (Granville’s nephew), in Zouch’s Works, vol. ii. p. 168.

§ “*Pietas Londinensis*,” by James Paterfon, M.A. 1714. It may be interesting to specify the churches which were then so honourably distinguished. They were Allhallows, Barking (where Hickes had been rector); St. Andrew’s, Holborn; St. Ann and St. Agnes, Aldersgate, where an early communion and sermon at 7 a.m. was maintained by a Religious Society; St. Clement’s Danes; Duke-street Chapel, Westminster, on all Sundays and holy days; St. Dunstan’s in the West, on every Sunday and holy day, and every day in the octaves of Christmas, Easter, and Whit Sunday; St. Paul’s Cathedral; the Chapels Royal of St. James and Whitehall; St. Lawrence Jewry, at 6 a.m.; St. Martin’s-in-the-Fields; St. Mary’s, White-chapel, every Sunday and on Easter Monday and Tuesday, Ash-Wednesday and Good Friday; St. Saviour’s, Southwark, weekly, from Easter to Trinity

Friday, New Year's Day, and some other solemn occasions;" and in his will he marks his satisfaction at such frequency of celebration, by bequeathing a small legacy to Dr. Marshall, the minister, "in regard of his constant attendance at the Eucharistical Sacrifice."

His doctrine of the Eucharistic Sacrifice he expresses in the following terms:—

"That when our Saviour celebrated the Jewish Sacrifice of the Passover with his disciples, a little before his sufferings, he substituted the Sacrament of His Body and His Blood as the true Christian Sacrifice in room of the Passover; and ordained it as a rite to invoke His Father by, instead of the manifold and bloody sacrifices of the law, and to be a means of supplication and address to God in the New Testament, as they were in the Old:—that in this Sacrifice the bread and the wine are offered to God to acknowledge him Lord of the creatures; and accordingly in the ancient Church they were laid on the holy table by the priest (as they are still ordered to be done by the rubrick in the Church of England*), and tendered to God by this short prayer, '*Lord, we offer thy own out of what thou hast*

Sunday; and St. Stephen's, Coleman-street. At Bow church and St. Matthew, Friday-street, on every holy day. At the latter church the Holy Communion was celebrated daily for two or three years by Ed. Stephens, who seldom had less than 30 communicants every day. See "Christian Remembrancer," No. 85, p. 207. In illustration of the above early hours of celebration, it may be mentioned that even Bishop Fleetwood speaks of receiving the sacrament fasting as then a common practice, and recommends it, if not inconvenient, as "in decency and regard to ancient practice."—*Reasonable Communicant*.

* That this was rarely observed in Nelson's time, appears from a letter (June 10, 1797) of Sir Geo. Wheeler's to Hickes, where he complains: "But now this is not observed in cathedral churches I was ever at the communion of, the want of which being gravely and reverently performed, has much helped I doubt not to raise unsound notions and to make the Table of the Lord contemptible." See *Life* by Zouch. On the other hand, Nelson tells us of Bishop Bull: "He always placed the elements of bread and wine upon the altar himself, after he had received them either from the churchwarden or clerk, or had taken them from some convenient place, where they were laid for that purpose. His constant practice was to offer them upon the Holy Table." *Life*, p. 62.

bountifully given us':—that they by consecration being made symbols of the Body and Blood of Christ, we thereby represent to God the Father the passion of his Son, to the end that He may, for His sake, according to the tenor of His covenant in Him, be favourable and propitious to us, miserable sinners:—that as Christ intercedes continually for us in heaven, by presenting His death and satisfaction to His Father; so the Church on earth in like manner may approach the throne of Grace, by representing Christ unto His Father in these holy mysteries of His death and passion:—that what every Christian does mentally and vocally, when he recommends his prayers to God the Father, through Jesus Christ, making mention of His death and satisfaction; that, in the public service of the Church is done by this rite, which our Saviour commanded in commemoration of him."

Or, as he more shortly expresses it in his Preface:—

"This Christian Sacrifice was ordained, not only to put us in mind of those great blessings which our Saviour purchased for us by His death (for what man that reflects upon his Christianity can easily forget them?) but it was also established as a sacred rite to supplicate God the Father, by the merits of our Saviour's Passion, representing to Him the symbols of His Body and Blood, that thereby He may become favourable and propitious to us. This sense of it is agreeable to the Holy Scriptures, as they were understood by those who lived nearest to the times of the Apostles, and has been evidently proved so by the learned, judicious, and pious Mr. Mede."

Mede is not the only author of our Church whom Nelson might have alleged as an authority for the sacrificial character of the Eucharist, nor was his own "Christian Sacrifice" the first manual of devotion in which it had been prominently put forward. The "Officium Eucharisticum" of Dr. Lake,* in which it is similarly taught, had long

* Archdeacon of Exeter, Chaplain and Tutor to the Princesses Mary and

been a popular manual. Dr. Edwards, the veteran and almost solitary champion of Calvinism within our Church at that period, declaimed against it as a "darling notion, more and more prevailing." It was taught by Nelson's contemporaries, Bishops Ken, Bull, and Wilson. His friend Archbishop Sharp* regretted the absence of the prayer of oblation in the second Prayer-book of Edward VI. Beveridge, while careful to proscribe the notion of a propitiatory sacrifice, was yet earnest for one which was commemorative and declaratory in the Eucharist. "This," he says, "is now our Christian shewbread, whereby we show forth the Lord's death till He come; this is our burnt-offering, our sin-offering, our trespass-offering, our thank-offering, our meat-offering, our drink-offering, and all the offerings required of us, whereby to commemorate our blessed Saviour for what he hath done for us." Potter, in his "Discourse upon Church Government," published the year after Nelson's book, has an elaborate exposition of the same doctrine; Hickes had always been jealous for the Christian priesthood and sacrifice; and John Johnson, of Cranbrook, went far beyond Hickes in his "Unbloody Sacrifice" and his "Propitiatory Oblation."

The works of Hickes and Johnson provoked a vehement opposition from Trimnel, Bishop of Norwich, as well as from Waterland, and some minor controversialists; and the personal character of Nelson did not preserve his book from similar animadversions. But he left the task of reply to more practised debaters, and was content to see his "Christian Sacrifice" rapidly acquiring the same amount of popular esteem which was enjoyed by his "Festivals and Fasts." His friends at the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge took 1000 copies for circulation. It

Ann. His "*Officium Eucharisticum*" was published 1673. It reached a 15th edition in 1693, and a 30th in 1743.

* Sharp's Life. Vol. i., 335.

reached a fifth edition before his death, and was reprinted sixteen times before the conclusion of the century.* The devotions at its close are more deserving of public acceptance than those attached to his previous works. They owe their original, he says, "to the ancient liturgies of the Christian Church, which I have carefully perused, and have transplanted many a pious thought and warm expression from those sources into this private composition." Some extracts may be observed in them from the "*Preces ante Missam*" of the Latin Church.

5. Prefixed to the fourth edition of the "*Christian Sacrifice*" (1712) were some "*Instructions for them that come to be confirmed, by way of question and answer,*" which had previously appeared as a separate tract. It was early put upon the list of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, passed through thirty-six editions in the course of the last century, and maintains its place upon the Catalogue at the present day. This little manual concludes the list of Robert Nelson's devotional writings.

* 16th edit. 1786.

CHAPTER V.

ROBERT NELSON IN HIS FAMILY RELATIONS.

Robert Nelson's relatives.—His mother ; he attends her on her death-bed.—His wife ; his account of her illness.—His step-son, Sir Berkeley Lucy he bequeaths to him his Library.—His father-in-law, the 1st Earl Berkeley His brother-in-law the 2nd Earl—Nelson summoned to his death-bed.—The Countess Berkeley ; her character by Swift.—Nelson's acquaintance with Swift.—Letter to him on Lord Berkeley's Epitaph.—The Hanger family.—Nelson's Letters to George and Gabriel Hanger.—Gabriel Hanger's after life.

OF Robert Nelson's intercourse with his own relations not many particulars have been preserved. Enough, however, may be gleaned to gratify our natural curiosity to view a public character in the unreserve of private life, and to assure us that he did not suffer the avocations of charity to engross him to the detriment of domestic duty, and that in every family with which he was connected he was the esteemed and trusted kinsman and the ever welcome guest.

His father (as we have seen) he lost in his infancy. His mother was spared to old age ; and one of his short notes to Wanley shows him to us in attendance on her dying bed "My mother is so very ill I cannot leave her. I fear she is *in extremis*. Let me know what is done. I am at Mr. Lordel's, in Monument Yard." (Dec. 22, 1703.) A few days afterwards he laid her in the chancel of St. Martin's Outwich,* where her father and mother had been laid, and

* Extract from the Register of St. Martin's Outwich. "Burials.

"1703, Jan. 4. Delicia Nelson from St. Margaret, New Fifth-street Hill buried."

where her brother, Sir Gabriel Roberts, with other members of her family, was afterwards interred. Mrs. Nelson left her son principal legatee and executor of her will.

The slight disparity of age has already been remarked on which existed between Robert Nelson and his wife. But neither this nor their difference in religion was sufficient to impair (though the latter at least might try) the sincerity of their mutual affection. When Wanley begged the loan of his portrait* by Kneller, in order to have a copy made of it for himself, Nelson begged that the removal of it might be deferred till his return from Bath, in terms which imply the fondest affection on his lady's part. "I shall be very ready to comply with your desire, and only beg the deferring of it till my return. My wife is at home, and she does not know how to supply the want of it in my absence." (May 13, 1702). Other mentions of her name in his correspondence equally exhibit the affectionate solicitude with which he watched her declining health. Thus he shares his anxieties respecting her with his old friend Dr. Mapletoft, in the following letter; the medical details of which may be excused in consideration of the conjugal solicitude which such a specification implies.

"16th Feb., 1798."†

"SIR,—The concern you express for your friends makes it reasonable you should have some account of us since we left Blackheath. Dr. Radcliff came to us next morning; he

* A wretched daub, now hanging in the Committee Room of the S.P.C.K., may possibly be the copy made for Wanley. A fine portrait (half-length) by Kneller, was given in 1779 by Nichols to the Company of Stationers, and is placed in the parlor of the public hall. A similar one, also bearing Kneller's name, is in the possession of the Rev. H. M. Majendie, vicar of Speen, having been bought at the sale of Sir Geo. Bowyer's at Radley House, Oxon. A large full-length by Kneller is in the Bodleian Gallery, to which it was given by Rev. Jas. Craven, in 1769.

† "European Magazine," vol. xv., p. 274.

does not venture either to purge or vomit my wife. He gives her a bitter infusion twice a day, and as often eight drops of tincture of steel in a glass of Spa water, with some ingredients of roots in white wine posset drink, which she may use as often as she pleases. This method he expects she should stick to for some time. I must confess I cannot find any alteration for the better. What he aims at is to recover her stomach, and to stop those passages whereby the gall flows into the blood. She eats little, and has had worse nights in town than in the country. I beg, Sir, your prayers that God would be pleased to bless the means that are used for her recovery, which I may expect from you as a friend as well as a Christian.

"I am, most faithfully yours,

"NELSON.

"We are lodged at the Black Posts, in Leicester Fields.

"To Dr. Mapletoft, at his
house in Greenwich."

She died on Jan. 26, 1705;* her fortune devolving upon her husband at her decease, and enabling him still further to enlarge his always munificent charity.

With his wife's children by her former husband, he always continued on the most kindly terms. Her son Sir Berkeley Lucy, the correspondent of Locke, and the admirer of Collins the deist, could not have been in all respects a congenial associate. But Nelson was his frequent visitor at his seat of Woodcote, and by way of antidote perhaps to his sceptical tendencies, bequeathed to him his

* Extract from the Register of Cranford Church. "Burials.

"Jan. 31, 1705. The Lady Theophila Nelson, daughter of y^e late Earl of Berkeley, of y^e Parish of St. Andrew, Holborn, was buried."

This date will show that Mr. Teale is mistaken, when he suggests that Nelson might be alluding in cold terms to the death of his wife, in a letter to Wanley Dec. 11, 1705. Teale's "Lives of English Laymen," p. 288.

valuable library, consisting in great part of books of theology and devotion.*

Into the Berkeley family Nelson was received with all the cordiality which genuine worth and congenial tastes would secure to him. His father-in-law, the first Earl of Berkeley, had been open to religious impressions in his youth; he had been benefited, like Nelson, by the friendship of Tillotson, and he had been the author of a moral and religious work,† which had some popularity at the time, and in which he shows that he could appreciate those endeavours in “doing good” to which his son-in-law devoted himself. “To do good,” he writes, “is the most pleasant employment in the world, and the most natural; it is to be like God, who is good and doeth good; it is to be like the blessed angels, whose great employment it is to be ministering spirits for the good of others. To be charitable and beneficial to mankind is to be a good angel, and a Saviour, and a God to men.”

With his brother-in-law, the second Earl, Nelson continued upon the same footing of kindliness and friendship. He was his habitual almoner in town, and his constant guest at Cranford, where he “found the same freedom,” he says, “as if he were in his own home.” He received a hasty summons to Berkeley Castle to assist him on his death-bed.

“I made a journey,” he writes,‡ “to Berkeley Castle to no

* On the death of Sir B. Lucy, the united collection was sold by auction in 1760, by Mr. Samuel Paterfon, forming a most extraordinary assemblage of devotion and infidelity. The sale lasted 33 days, there being as many as 4886 lots, besides some others not then come to hand, which were sold the following year in an anonymous auction. Nichols’ “Lit. Anec.” vol. iv. p. 188.

† “Historical Applications and occasional Meditations upon various Subjects, written by a Person of Honor.” 1670. It went through three editions from 1670 to 1680. It is addressed to Mary, Countess of Warwick, the daughter of Richard Boyle, Earl of Cork, a lady who at his desire had given him rules of holy living in his youth. 1659.

‡ Nelson to Mapletoft. St. Luke’s Day, 1710. “European Magazine,” vol. xvi., p. 167. Lord Berkeley died 24th Sept., 1710.

purpose, for my lord was dead before I could arrive, and yet I went with great expedition, and rid post, which I have disused for many years. When my lord found himself in sinking circumstances, he desired to speak with me, so that the express that came for his son brought me letters, which was the reason for my undertaking the journey. But though I was disappointed in seeing my lord, I had the satisfaction to hear that he died with great piety and devotion, and bore his pains with great patience. He thanked God that he had not deferred the great business of repentance to a sick bed, which he found a very improper season for a matter of that importance; and I know that his lordship had been serious in religion for some time, which makes me hope with reason that his repentance was accepted."

With the Countess, Nelson was on equal terms of friendship, and received from her, he says, during his stays at Cranford, all the attentions of a mother. This was the lady to whom Swift dedicated his "*Project for the Advancement of Religion*,"* as to one in whom "the easiest and politest conversation, joined with the truest piety, may be observed in as great perfection as they were ever seen apart in any other person;" complimenting her "that by your prudence and management under several disadvantages you have preserved the lustre of that noble family into which you were grafted; and which the unwarrantable profusion of ancestors for many generations had too much eclipsed. Then how happily you perform every office of life to which Providence has called you; in the education of those two incomparable daughters, whose conduct is so universally admired, in every duty of a prudent, complying, and affectionate wife, in that care which descends to the meanest of your domestics; and, lastly, in that endless

* The pamphlet seems also to have been submitted to Nelson's judgment. "With Mr. Nelson, I am entirely of opinion that her Majesty's reading of that book of the *Project for the increase of morality and piety*, may be of very great use to that end." Lord Berkeley to Dr. Swift. "*Swift's Letters*," vol. i., p. 8. Ed. 1767.

bounty to the poor, and discretion where to distribute it.* At the bottom of this eulogistic dedication we cannot but suppose a substratum of truth to have lain, sufficient to evince the cordial welcome which so congenial a character as Robert Nelson would be sure to receive in her house. Swift was for some time entertained in her household as chaplain, and would thus be brought himself into occasional contact with him. Esteem or intimacy it is impossible to suppose between men so opposite in character and aim of life, as the profane and worldly cleric and the devout layman. And while Swift speaks of Nelson in terms of respect, as "a very pious, learned, and worthy gentleman of the non-juring party,"† Nelson addresses him in language of but distant civility when he has occasion to press him for an epitaph that he had promised for a tablet that was to be put up to his late patron's memory in Berkeley Church :

" *Ath-Wednesday, Feb. 22, 1748.* ‡

"REVEREND SIR,—I beg leave to put you in mind of the inscription which you are to prepare for the Earl of Berkeley's monument. My lady dowager has determined to have it in Latin ; so that I hope you want no further directions towards the finishing of it. The workman calls upon me for it, which is the reason of this trouble given you by,

" Rev. Sir,

" Your most humble servant,

" ROBERT NELSON."

But the religious influence which Nelson exercised in the families with which he was connected, will be best

* "*Swift's Works*," vol. viii. p. 79, &c. The nave of St. Dunstan's, Cranford, was rebuilt by this pious lady in 1716.

† "*Works*," vol. viii. p. 275.

‡ "*Swift's Letters*," by Hawkesworth. Vol. i. p. 71. ed. 1767.

exhibited by the two Letters of Advice which he addressed to his two young relatives, George and Gabriel Hanger, when leaving England in early life for mercantile employment at Smyrna. All of Nelson's city connexions (it may be observed) were engaged in this trade to the Levant. His own father had made his fortune at Aleppo, and he had himself been designed to follow a similar employ. "'Tis my earnest desire," John Nelson wrote, "to my wife and executors, that my sonne may be brought up in the true feare of God, and when fitt, placed with a Turkey merchant, that will send him for Aleppo." Sir Gabriel Roberts was deputy governor of the Levant Company, and his brother William a merchant in the trade. George Hanger, the grandfather of the two young men, had raised his fortune at Smyrna, and their uncle John was also a wealthy trader to the Levant. With the Hanger family Nelson had been intimate from his boyhood. He had resided for some years, it will be remembered, at his aunt Hanger's mansion of Dryfield, when receiving instruction from Dr. Bull. With her son George, then a lad of his own age, he maintained, throughout after life, in spite of their differing politics—for George Hanger was as earnest a partisan of the Revolution as Nelson was of the exiled family, christening his children William and Mary, and being knighted by the reigning sovereign for his zeal in his behalf:—with this Whig cousin he still maintained the intimacy which they may have contracted in their youth, entrusting to him at last the charitable disposition of his estate as one of the executors to his will. And when his eldest son George left England, at about seventeen years of age, to follow his hereditary profession at Smyrna, Robert Nelson, who was his godfather, supplied him for his stay abroad with a parcel of religious books, and addressed to him the following admirable letter of advice; which, with the exception of a paragraph where his nonjuring doctrine of

passive obedience appears, forms as excellent a guide for life as could now be placed in a young man's hand :—

*To George Hanger, Esq.**

“DEAR COUSIN,—Your father having designed to send you for Turkey by the next ships bound to those parts, and intending thereby to breed you to business; that you may be enabled to advance your own fortune in the world, and to assist your brothers when they shall be fit to receive the advantages of your kindness; I cannot forbear commending that readiness of mind you have shown on this occasion to comply with that scheme which your father, on mature deliberation, with the advice of your best friends, has formed for the employment of your youth. So near a relation can never want kindness to design that which is best for you; and the advantages of his good sense and great experience enable him to judge right in this matter; so that, being governed by the dictates of so kind and wise a father, you steer by a much surer compass, than by following the suggestions of your own thoughts, which must want due ripeness in that path of life you now tread. I look upon this first step of your conduct to be a happy preface of your future wisdom and steadiness; and a good omen that your voyage of life will be prosperous and successful; for the miscarriage of many a youth has been owing to his own wilfulness and obstinacy; refusing the advice and guidance of his best friends when he stood most in want of it. Being therefore, Sir, determined to travel, by your father's appointment, and by your own prudent consent; I thought myself obliged to give you some advice in relation to your future conduct; and you ought to bear with me the rather in this matter, because I have had some share in the care of your education. Besides, the character of a godfather entitles me to some [extent] to prescribe to you; but whether any of these reasons would have prevailed upon me, if I had not felt a particular love and kindness for you, I know not. I am sure the liberty I am now about to take proceeds from a sincere and hearty concern

* Nichols' "Literary Anecdotes," vol. iv. p. 200, &c.

for your future welfare ; and upon that ground, therefore, I hope it will be agreeable and acceptable to you.

“ 1. In the first place, I must beg you often to reflect upon the great end for which you were sent into the world ; which was, not to sport away your time in pleasure, nor only to get a fair estate ; but to fit and prepare yourself for a happy eternity, in the enjoyment of God by a constant and universal obedience to all His holy laws ; in comparison of which, all the labours of life are mere trifles. My reason for giving you this hint is, that, by having your chief business always in your view, you may be continually upon your guard ; so that neither the pleasures nor business of life, nor the desires of growing rich, may ever cause you to forget that you are a stranger upon earth, and that your days are as a shadow which will soon pass away.

“ 2. In the second place, you must endeavour that this great end be prosecuted steadily and vigorously, by all those ways and means which God has established for the working out your salvation. You must resolve upon a holy and virtuous life, if ever you pretend to attain that happiness which God has promised. All other ways of getting to Heaven are fallacious ; and will in the end deceive you, if ever you are so unhappy as to trust to them ; for *without holiness no man shall see the Lord*. Now the virtue and holiness I mean, are of a large extent ; and comprehend your duty to God, your neighbour, and yourself ; and is what the Apostle calls living *righteously, soberly, and godly in this present world*. In order to this purpose, God has given us His holy word to instruct us in the particulars of our duty ; which, therefore, you must frequently peruse with great application of mind. He has, moreover, encouraged our addresses to Him, by promising to hear our prayers ; which we must therefore offer to Him in our closets, and in the public congregations, that we may receive strength and power from above, to perform our duty. He has farther instituted the Holy Sacrament, to be a continual memorial of the sacrifice of Christ's death, to convey to us the benefits of his sufferings ; therefore, if you sincerely desire the pardon of your sins, grace and assistance to conquer them, and to make a progress in all

virtue, you must frequently approach the altar, where these blessings are to be found; and indeed a man must have but very slight notions of the benefits of Christ's death, that refuses to give this easy testimony of a thankful heart. You must frequently examine yourself, that you may exercise repentance where you may fall short of your duty, and that you may thank God where you have been enabled to perform it; you must accustom yourself to meditate upon such divine subjects as occur in the course of your reading, that you may stir up all the faculties of your soul to a vigorous prosecution of them. The aforementioned means of grace are not to be rested in as the substance of religion, but are to be used as necessary to beget in us true piety and virtue; and except we aim at that in the use of them, they will not be acceptable to God. A man may be a bad man, and frequent them; and yet there is no being good without them, when the providence of God gives us the opportunity to enjoy them.

"3. In the third place, I must desire you, as much as you can, to live by rule and method; to divide the day into such proportions, that a proper time may be assigned for all your actions; that the hours of your devotion, of your business, and your diversions, may all be stated; thus time will not lie upon your hands, nor sting you with regret when past. While you are subject to the commands of others, you must be content to have your hours of business regulated by them; these you will quickly be acquainted with; and what are left to your own disposal, must be employed partly in your prayers, in reading good books, and such as are otherwise commendable, both French and Latin, that you may not lose those languages you have taken so much pains to acquire.

"4. In the fourth place, I must advise you to diligence and industry in your business, which is the best method to make it succeed. 'Seest thou a man,' says Solomon, 'diligent in his business, he shall stand before princes.' The wisdom of man is distinguished by using proper and fit means to attain his end. Therefore, as you are concerned to support that character, and desire to bring to perfection what you project, you must never be careless

and negligent in those things committed to your trust and management ; for this is even to offend against the duties of religion.

“ 5. In the fifth place, since trade and commerce are pitched upon for your employments, never deviate from exact justice and uprightness in all your dealings. Every particular circumstance of life has its particular temptation ; and a man that sincerely designs his duty, will put his guard on that place where the greatest danger is apprehended. Frequent dealings with others present to us as frequent opportunities of over-reaching them ; and the more a man is trusted, the better he is able to play the knave. Now, though I think as to this world, that honesty is the best method of thriving, because it secures credit and reputation, which are the main instruments of trade and commerce ; yet there are some opportunities of unrighteous gain, that require good principles of religion to keep a man right. Remember always that no repentance will make our peace with God for ill-gotten goods without restitution ; which makes that necessary work difficult and irksome :—that, whatever varnish we are able to put upon our injustice before men, yet God sees through the whole deceit, and will one day judge us for it ; and it contradicts the great rule laid down by our Saviour, of doing to others as we would they should do unto us.

“ 6. In the sixth place, I must not forget to enjoin you to take care to beware of covetousness, because the love of money is the root of all evil ; and it is a secret poison, which destroys the souls of such men who otherwise appear sober and virtuous. Besides, this is a vice particularly incident to those that get estates by their own industry, and therefore it is the more necessary to give you warning of it. Be not, therefore, over-eager in the pursuit of riches ; and when they increase, set not your heart upon them. To acquire them by unjust means, is the perfection of covetousness ; but this vice lurks in many other actions less notorious ; as, when a man pursues the world to the neglect of the duties of religion, even of prayer in his closet and family ; when his mind is always anxious about the success of his projects ; when the poor have no share of his gains ; when

he is fordid, and cannot find in his heart to enjoy moderately what he possesses, or, if he does, spends it upon his lusts; and when he makes riches his trust and confidence. **Now** the love of this world is enmity against God, and does as effectually debar us from heaven, as all the extravagancies of lewdness and debauchery.

“7. In the seventh place, I must put you in mind of keeping good company, by which I mean chiefly men of pious and virtuous dispositions; though, with these qualifications, it may be extended to those of the best rank and quality where you reside, from whom you will be able to learn more than from those of an inferior education. And it is often seen that a young gentleman, newly come into the world, is more frequently ruined by mean and inferior company, than by conversing with his superiors, for whom having a deference, he becomes more modest and humble in his behaviour; whereas when he finds himself the top of the company, it disposes him to pride and vanity. It is difficult for those whose circumstances throw them into a great deal of company, always to avoid that which is bad; and charity may sometimes oblige men to converse with such, in order to their reformation, were there any probable hopes of making bad men better. But it is in every man's power to chuse what persons he designs for friendship and frequent conversation; a matter of that importance, that it requires time and serious deliberation before you engage. Men of no principles of religion are not to be relied upon, having no foundation to support friendship; besides, they may be apt to infect you with scepticism; and men who believe religion, and act contrary to their principles, give but a scurvy proof of their sincerity, and by their bad example may insensibly corrupt your morals. Those we love have a mighty influence over us; therefore let not a wicked man become your intimate.

“8. In the eighth place, I must advise you to obstinate temperance in drinking, the best method to preserve health, and a virtue strictly enjoined by the Christian religion. There is no young man that converses in the world, but who is more or less exposed to this temptation; but your particular situation of Smyrna, by reason of the frequent

arrival of ships, will make it difficult for you not to exceed the Christian measure, except you arm yourself with great resolution. Never think it a piece of manhood to be drunk yourself, or to make others so; for this is to extinguish yourself by what is the deprivation of manhood, extinguishing at once both your sense and reason; besides, it will make you liable to many unfortunate accidents. A debauch has brought many a fever, which has ended in death; has occasioned the breaking of many a limb, which is not recovered without pain and charge; and how many have broke their necks on such occasions, and so gone out of the world without repenting of so great a crime! Sometimes it creates quarrels, which have cost the life of one or both the disputants. But, if you escape these dangers that affect the body, your best part, your soul, must suffer by so plain a breach of your duty, till you reconcile yourself to God by unfeigned repentance. Never reckon an excess in drinking a small fault, a *pecadiglio*, for this may prevail upon you to comply with the importunity of others; it is certainly a breach of God's laws, and you must count nothing inconsiderable that offends Him. Be free to own your weakness as to drinking; that it prejudices your health, and that you are not able to bear so much as others; and then, if the company have any good manners, they will not press you. When you entertain friends yourself, introduce coffee and tea after dinner, and propose some diversion, that drinking may be hindered. Several little arts a man will call to his assistance, that designs to keep himself and the company sober. But then, if you are at any time surpris'd, immediately next day testify your repentance, profess your sorrow to God, and resolve on more firmness for the time to come; if your companions should make a jest of it, let them know it is no jesting matter. And I think you would do well, if you punished yourself for so unfortunate an accident, by imposing upon yourself a day of fasting, or by abstaining from the use of wine for two or three days.

“9. In the ninth place, I must caution you against uncleanness, so frequent a failure in youth,* and which, when

* That a youth about to settle at Smyrna, stood in need of such advices will

once indulged, will corrupt the best principles, and has carried many a man to scepticism and infidelity ; because, when a man cannot reconcile his constant practice to the laws of religion, he casts about how to get rid of the obligation of such laws, which bear so hard upon him, and give him so much uneasiness. Now the best rule in this case is, never to indulge the least appearance of this vice, to discourage all loose and wanton thoughts which may arise in your mind, to forbear all obscene and filthy discourse, to avoid all familiarity with the fair sex, not to seem pleased with others' attempts to divert the company by lewd jests, to be modest towards yourself, and to treat yourself with reverence and respect. For chastity consists in a due government of those appetites which God has placed in us for the propagating of mankind ; which are never to be gratified but in a state of matrimony ; so that anything that tends to provoke these appetites out of that state, by our own voluntary consent, has a share of the guilt of the last act, and is what we must be accountable for, and therefore ought carefully to be watched against. If you ever give yourself up to this vice, you will expose your constitution to great shocks, make your body the sink of many noisome diseases, consume your estate, neglect your business, and bring contempt upon you from all sober people ; it will harden you against all good advice, provoke the wrath of God, and infallibly draw upon you in the next world the miseries of a sad eternity.

“10. In the tenth place, guard yourself from the bane of conversation which is evil-speaking. This lessening the reputation of others by exposing their faults is grown so common, that, more or less, even good people split upon

appear from the following extract from a letter of the Board of the Levant Company in London, dated 10 Aug. 1703, addressed to the Factory at Smyrna :—“ We are now to admonish some among you, who by a notorious and dissolute course of life, as to women, are become a dishonor to our religion, a scandal to our nation, and an ill example to others, besides the danger that attends on estates thereby ; assuring such as are concerned that if this caution and good admonition doth not take effect with them to reform their wicked practices, we shall take such further course as will not be pleasing to them, and remove such dissolute persons out of our privileges. But as we hope the greater part of you have maintained the probity and virtue of honest men and good Christians, so we recommend you always to continue the same.”

the rock ; so that if you have not a particular watch over yourself, you will be carried down the stream, and become involved in this common calamity. Some people never examine the truth of what they report, provided it was told them ; but this is calumny and slander ; and if they know what they say to be true, yet if neither justice nor charity require the discovery, it is the vice of evil-speaking, forbid by the Christian religion ; for, when there is no justifiable reason to the contrary, we ought to throw a veil over the faults of our neighbour, for this is the treatment we desire from them : we are not willing what is true of ourselves should be exposed to public view ; besides, it is contrary to that love which is due to our neighbour, which, when sincere, will dispose us to cover those defects that may tend to the impairing of his reputation. Now, the more you mortify the evil passions of pride, envy, and revenge, the less you will be subject to distraction,* which very often proceeds from them. An over-busy meddling temper will expose you to the same temptation ; but, if you would entirely secure yourself, resolve never to speak ill of any one. Do not suffer yourself to repeat stories to the disadvantage of others, though never so public ; for, though this on some occasions might be innocently done, yet by degrees it may insensibly betray you to real defamation.

“11. In the eleventh place, I must give you a great charge, not to suffer yourself to be infected with the common vice of swearing. You will find yourself tempted to this unreasonable sin by the practice of all nations, who agree in no evil more universally than this. But remember, that an honest man’s word should be esteemed so sacred, that he should have no occasion to confirm what he says by an oath ; besides, the reverence of a solemn appeal to God, being diminished by common swearing, leads a man to perjury, a most confirmed piece of iniquity. It is plainly and directly forbid by the Christian religion ; and the corruption of our nature suggests the fewest temptations to it of any vice whatever ; which makes the practice of customary swearing more inexcusable. Avoid the company of common swearers, for conversing frequently with them will abate

* Query, detraction.

that horror we have at first for the rash and common use of oaths. If I mistake not, you have been preserved hitherto from this corruption; but let not the greatness or genteelness of those that practise it ever betray you to any good opinion of it. You must not imitate the best-bred men by their vices, which are no part of their good-breeding.

“12. In the twelfth place remember to be courteous and affable towards all men; they who exclude civility out of the catalogue of virtues seem to me not thoroughly to understand the nature of Christianity. By this method you will preserve the good will of those you converse with, which will make them the readier to serve you upon all occasions, and by degrees give you power to do them good in matters of the greatest importance. In time it will bring you to a habit of self-denial; for this affability will often make you forego what you like best, in indifferent things, in order to please and oblige others; and it is no inconsiderable talent to be ready upon all occasions to contradict our own wills; besides, it is part of that charity we owe to our neighbours, to whom we are obliged to do good by all the means that lie in our power; and certainly every man is delighted and pleased in being well used.

“13. In the thirteenth place, I must particularly recommend to you the practice of charity; by which I mean doing good to the souls and bodies of men. It is true, God has set apart a particular order of men to be useful and serviceable to others in the great affair of their salvation, and there are several holy actions which are peculiar to the priests of the Lord, which for a layman to invade would be sacrilege. But there are some others which are common to both; every man may instruct his children and servants in the principles of religion, and reprove others when they transgress, and upon fit occasions insinuate exhortations to piety; nay, I think it their duty so to do. But, if my children or servants want baptism, I must call for a minister; if I would have them confirmed, I must carry them to a bishop, to lay his hands on them, and bless them; if they would receive the holy sacrament, or absolution for any sin that troubles their consciences, I must apply to the priests that wait at the altar; if I would

consecrate a child to the service of the Church, I must desire a bishop to ordain him, because they only are intrusted with that power. But when you have servants, endeavour to instruct them in necessary Christian knowledge; lead them by your repeated advice, as well as example, in the practice of religion; comfort your friends that mourn and are afflicted, with seasonable discourses of piety; and reprove prudently and gently all your companions when you find they transgress God's laws. But never unnecessarily vex or grieve any man's mind, for thereby you hurt his soul. As to their bodies, you must, according to your abilities, relieve their wants, and supply their necessities; and, in order to this purpose, I must suggest to you what I take to be a prudent management; which is to dedicate and lay apart a proportion of your gains or your income, when it is certain, for alms-deeds; which will make the work easy and delightful, and you moreover ready to embrace any opportunity that offers for doing good, because you are before-hand provided with the means. The ways of exercising this sort of charity are as various as those wants the body labours under; as feeding the hungry, cloathing the naked, visiting the sick, and those in prison; redeeming those in slavery and captivity; and comforting such as are under any oppression. These good works, according to your ability, the Christian religion obliges you to; you are further provoked to them by the example of our Lord and Saviour, who went about doing good; and at the day of judgment the particular inquiry will run upon these heads which I have mentioned, as you may see in the xxvth of St. Matthew, and the reward or punishment will then be assigned according to those rules.

“ 14. In the fourteenth place, I must caution you against gaming; hoping it will never make any considerable part of your diversion. When once it is loved, it consumes a great deal of time, which is too precious to be thrown away at that rate; the night by this means is turned into day, and the day into night. When men play deep, they venture the ruining of themselves, or at least win from others what should maintain their families; which cannot be justified. This has so inverted the order of the world,

that it hath brought footmen into coaches, and has made them walk on foot that before kept them. It raises all those passions which it is the business of Christians to subdue, and often creates such passions as end in murder. If you should sometimes divert yourself this way, avoid games of chance, for they are the most bewitching, and the least under government; and when you play at games of skill, never sit too long at them, nor venture much money, nor engage with such as are violently passionate. I wish in your diversions you would aim at health as well as pleasure; which you may reap from walking, riding, shooting, or bowling; always remembering that diversions are for refreshment, not for an employment.

“ 15. In the fifteenth place, I must press upon you the constant use of the means of grace; such as are prayer, reading the Holy Scriptures, receiving the blessed sacrament, self-examination, meditation, observation of the Lord's Day, and other Feasts and Fasts of the Church. Some men deceive themselves, indeed, by placing all religion in these performances; and some, on the other hand, deceive themselves by thinking they are above them; but, if you really design the end, which is piety, and virtue, and holiness in all your conversation, you must make use of those means, and that frequently, which God has prescribed for that purpose. You may as well pretend to grow rich without diligence and industry, as to be truly good without praying and receiving the sacrament, &c.

“ The grace of God is necessary, to enable us to do every thing that is good, and to strengthen us in resisting every thing that is evil; and how can we ever hope for such necessary and powerful assistance, except we seek for it in the ways of God's appointment? I must therefore entreat you to be constant to your morning and evening devotions in your closet, to perform them with great seriousness and application of mind, remembering always that Great Majesty to whom you address; and at such times it will be very useful to read some portions of the Scripture, especially if you consult some good paraphrase or comment upon it. Take all opportunities that are consistent with your business of attending the public prayers,

which are most acceptable to God, as tending most to his glory ; and always upon such occasions behave yourself with great reverence and devotion, considering that you are, after a peculiar manner in the presence of God. Stand, sit, or kneel, as the Church directs in her rubrics ; never talk nor gaze about in the church, as it is too common, to the great scandal of Christians ; endeavour to correct this ill custom by a contrary carriage, that your example may rebuke and reprove such careless and negligent worshippers. Never turn your back upon the holy communion : when all things are prepared for the celebration of the holy mysteries, let no pretence of your own unpreparedness excuse your attendance. If you live, and I hope you will, as it becomes a Christian, you can very seldom have a just reason for your absence. ‘ Draw near,’ therefore, to the holy table with great humility and devotion, ‘ and take the holy sacrament to your comfort.’ The opportunities of receiving abroad offer but rarely ; which makes it very inexcusable if ever you omit any that present themselves. Pay a particular regard to the Lord’s Day, commonly called Sunday ; distinguish it as much by your practice, as it is by divine institution ; attend the solemnities of religion in public at such times ; this I look upon as of indispensable obligation, and not to be omitted but in cases of great necessity. Let the rest of the day be dedicated to pious and devout employments. This seems peculiarly necessary to men of business and traffic ; because, being intent all the week long upon their worldly concerns, they really stand in need of recollection and retirement for the improvement of their minds, which the circumstances of Sunday are very proper to promote. Not that I would have you superstitious in the observance of it, making that absolutely necessary which is necessary only as a means ; and, therefore, when you are accidentally by company prevented in your method, grow not fullen and morose ; rather endeavour to season the conversation with hints of piety ; and dexterously introduce such topics of discourse as make the conversation suitable to the day ; but, if possible, let not company deprive you of those advantages you may receive from retirement at such times. You must

needs think that I reckon the observation of the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of great advantage to the Christian life, or else I should not have troubled the world with so large a book upon that subject : to which I refer you for my thoughts in that matter ; desiring you to read a chapter in it, as the particular days occur, throughout the whole year. As to self-examination, the oftener you perform it, the less trouble and time it will take up ; so that, if you would accustom yourself to recollection every evening before you say your prayers, you would easily know the state of your mind, by running over the actions of the day past ; which would discover any false step that you had made, and which required a particular repentance.

“Never delay this work beyond once a week ; you may choose Sunday for that purpose, as the time you are surest to command. Keeping accounts fair and clear has a great efficacy in our spiritual affairs as in our temporal and worldly concerns. When you read any book upon a religious subject, accustom yourself to reflect upon what you have read, that you may perceive whether it enlightens your understanding, or influences your will, or warms your affections ; for the business of meditation is, to digest that spiritual nourishment we take in by reading ; without this practice, much learning and reading turns to little account. I have provided you with a collection of books, from which I am sure you may be thoroughly instructed in all necessary Christian knowledge ; excited to the practice of all Christian graces and institutions ; and furnished for the exercise of that devotion that is necessary for you, in private and in public, upon most of the occurrences in life ; but I must freely tell you that these books will not work as charms ; if they serve but for the ornament of your closet, they will only administer to vanity. They must be read attentively, and seriously considered, if you design that advantage I have aimed at in making the collection. There is one thing I must observe to you before I conclude this head, that, by reading Archbishop Tillotson’s works with care and observation, you will not only learn true notions of religion, but also the way and manner of writing English correctly and purely ; his style I take to be the best standard

of the English language ; therefore, if you would perfect yourself in what is so necessary for a gentleman and a man of business, I mean writing well, observe his phrases, and the propriety with which he uses words, and the clearness with which he expresses himself on all subjects.

“ 16. In the sixteenth place, I cannot conclude these particular heads without putting you in mind of being constant to the communion of the Church of England. Abroad you may meet with solicitations to popery ; but the Church of Rome very falsely pretends to be the Catholic Church ; at best she can only arrive to be a very corrupt part of it. At home you may be tempted to countenance the separation ; but you cannot communicate with the dissenters without incurring the guilt of schism. The Church of England not only believes the Scriptures to be the rule of faith, but professes her faith in all those ancient forms of words called creeds, which the primitive Church made use of ; to which the Church of Rome has made great additions, and requires her novelties to be believed as necessary articles of faith ; though the Scriptures and primitive antiquity are silent concerning them, and in some points expressly against them. Their errors in doctrine are aggravated by considerable corruptions in her public offices ; which are not only in an unknown tongue, and consequently no way edifying to the people, but are in some parts addressed to saints and angels, contrary to Scripture and the practice of the primitive Church. And yet farther, she has established an absolute monarchy in the Church, by cloathing the Bishop of Rome, commonly called the Pope, with such prerogatives as are inconsistent with the rights of other bishops, which are established by divine right. The Church of England, moreover, preserves the three orders of bishops, priests, and deacons, in a due subordination, as instituted by our Saviour and His Apostles ; whereby she is secured of a right and truly canonical ministry, and consequently her people furnished with valid sacraments. Now, the dissenters have rejected this divine subordination of church officers ; and, by throwing off episcopacy, as their ministers have no lawful commission, so their people cannot be assured of the validity of ordinances administered by such teachers. So

that you see, in one communion, errors in faith corrupt the doctrine of the Church ; and, in the other communion, errors in polity and government destroy the unity of it ; both which endanger salvation ; and therefore I recommend to you the Church of England with greater earnestness, because free from both these fatal inconveniences. There is another thing wherein the Church of England has gloried as her particular characteristic ; that she teaches sincere obedience and uncorrupted loyalty to princes ; that we ought to pay them that obedience our constitution requires, and upon no pretence whatever to resist them by taking up arms against them, which is what is called rebellion. This her homilies teach, which contain good and wholesome doctrine ; and this the laws of the land bind firmly upon us ; for they place the power of the sword in the king, and no man can draw it but by commission from him. (See the Militia Act of Charles II.) And if subjects have never so good reason to take up arms against the crown, if for want of success they ever come to a fair trial according to the laws, they must be found guilty of high treason, their own friends being upon their jury. The laws are so plain in this case that they have afforded no manner of remedy to the subject in those extraordinary cases that are urged. So that non-resistance and passive obedience is the doctrine of the Church and state. I am sure the primitive Christians professed it, even when they felt the bad effects of it in this world, by suffering wrongfully, contrary to the laws of the state, and even to the rights of human nature. The Papists and Presbyterians have been both tardy in this point ; and I wish the practice of some in the Church of England had been more blameless ; but, as long as her homilies and her laws continue unaltered, it cannot be said that either Church or state avows such doctrines. But these differences between the Church of England, the Roman Catholics, and Dissenters, and the other subjects I have hinted to you in this letter, are largely explained in those books I have recommended to your perusal ; and therefore I shall add no more concerning them.

“ I must only put you in mind, that, by conversing with those that are strangers to the name of Christ, you are under

a more particular obligation of living according to the maxims and rules of the Gospel; for otherwise you will bring a scandal upon the Christian religion, and expose the doctrine as well as the person of the blessed Jesus to the scorn and contempt of Mahometans and heathens; and woe be to that man by whom offences come!

“As to the particular rules that relate to travelling, you will have no occasion for them at present; because you are to go by sea to Smyrna, where you are like to reside for some time. It is very probable, your return may be through Italy and France; or at least I wish you may take those countries in your way home; and by that time your own good understanding will be so ripened by experience that you will be sufficiently able to guide and direct yourself. I will, however, suggest to you a few thoughts on that matter before I conclude.

“1. First, never set yourself to find fault with the different customs of other countries. This certainly proves you to be a novice, and is the surest method to disoblige the natives, whose friendship and kindness you stand in need of. It is your business, indeed, among other things, to observe their customs, that you may compare them with your own, in order to consider on which side the advantage lies. But if you have reason to prefer your own, never treat their's with scorn and contempt; for this reflects upon those that use them, and will certainly provoke their indignation against you; it will make them despise you, shun your company, and deprive you of the advantages you might receive from their conversation. And notwithstanding the unreasonableness of this practice, nothing is more common among young travellers, and therefore fit to be hinted at.

“2. Secondly, I must carry you a step farther; which is, to conform yourself as much as you can to the customs of those with whom you reside. All mankind are fond of their own ways and methods of living; and as they think themselves wiser than others, so consequently they determine their own customs to be best. Now, your giving into their ways and manners flatters their self-love, and will incline them to be desirous to oblige you; besides they will have a better opinion of your understanding, when you

approve of what they have established. This will raise your character; and according as they value and esteem you, so in proportion you will receive the testimonies of their kindness and respect. Besides, I cannot tell but that in this method you may best preserve your health; for different climates require different managements; and it is to be supposed, that the long experience of the natives must have found out that regimen which best secures health. I am very sure, gentlemen have destroyed themselves by eating flesh and drinking wine with the same freedom in hot countries as they have been accustomed to in their own colder climes; and therefore could not forbear giving you this direction.

“3. Thirdly, endeavour to be acquainted with men of the best character in all the countries through which you pass; by which I chiefly mean men distinguished for learning, wisdom, and virtue; from whose conversation your mind will receive the greatest improvement, and from whom you will learn what is fittest to be seen, and what is most proper in that place to entertain the curiosity of a stranger. Besides, their acquaintance will procure you respect from others; for, being observed to frequent such men, it will be imagined that you have some of those good qualities yourself which you admire in others. But this advice does not only refer to wise and learned men, but also to those of the best rank and quality, who in all countries are most polished in their manners and behaviour; so that you will never be able to make a true judgment of any country, if you do not know how people of quality live, as well as those of the middle and inferior rank. Strangers generally employ themselves more in seeing sights and rarities, than in knowing men; but, as the first should not be neglected, so in travelling the greatest stress should be laid upon the latter; which the want of knowing the language of the place often prevents, and therefore a traveller should make it his business to be perfect in the language of the place, without which it is impossible he can make any great improvements.

“But be sure, while you are intent upon acquiring ornaments of good breeding, never forget nor forfeit those

qualifications that constitute the good Christian. First, take care to be a good man, and then you cannot be too fine a gentleman; when you have secured *the pearl of great price*, you will do very well to set it to the best advantage.

“And because I am sensible of the great weakness of human nature, and of the strength of those temptations you may meet with, to the advice I have given you, I shall add my hearty prayers to God,

“That His grace may constantly accompany you; that by His holy inspiration you may think those things that are good, and that by His merciful guiding you may perform the same; that your life may be long and happy; that prosperity may never corrupt you, and that affliction may always make you better; and that all your ways may be disposed towards the attainment of everlasting salvation; that, among all the changes and chances of this mortal life, you may ever be defended by God’s most gracious and ready help, through Jesus Christ our Lord; to which well-weighed petitions of the Church, a most hearty Amen is affixed by,

“Dear Cousin,

“Your most faithful friend, and humble servant,

“ROBERT NELSON.”

“27th July, 1708.”

When George Hanger’s younger brother Gabriel left England for a similar purpose, a few years later, Nelson addressed to him also the following shorter epistle.*

To Mr. Gabriel Hanger.

“DEAR COUSIN,—The best method I can contrive of showing my concern for you at present is, to furnish you with a copy of that letter which I wrote to your eldest brother upon his leaving England, because it contains some rules which may be of use to you in the conduct of a Christian life. Your case and his are so far alike, that you both leave your own country, and are, by the designation of your best friend, your father, settled in a way of merchandise, whereby, by God’s blessing upon your own industry, you

* Nichols’ Lit. Anec, vol. iv. p. 220 et seqq.

may both very probably raise a considerable fortune, prove useful members of the commowwealth, and make others happy in sharing your plenty and abundance. From this similitude of circumstances will arise an agreement in those temptations which it is likely may attack you both; and therefore what I thought proper to say to him you may very well apply to yourself; and thus far I may answer, that, if you take care to practise what is there suggested, you will not fail of recommending yourself to all those in whose power it is to advance your interest; but, what is more considerable, you will thereby secure the favour of Almighty God, whose blessing is necessary to succeed in all your undertakings, and who alone can bestow upon you a happiness that is lasting and durable, which he has reserved in heaven for all those who truly love and fear him. You must needs be sensible what care and expence your father has been at in your education, to fit you for the employment you engage in; you know very well what charge he has bestowed to equip you for this voyage, and how ready he has been to gratify you in everything you could either ask or desire of him, in order to your pleasure and profit. Now, all this adds fresh obligations to your duty; and what returns can you make for so much kindness, which will please him better than your steady sobriety and your constant application to your business? These are such injunctions as are necessary to your own welfare; and yet he will esteem them a full compensation for that paternal affection which he has showed towards you. And how much more pleasant and comfortable it is to be the joy of your parents by your prudent and Christian behaviour, than to increase those cares you have already necessarily given them? for you cannot indulge any extravagant and disorderly course without oppressing their minds with sorrow and grief, in a time of life when they are least able to bear it.

“This argument of pleasing your best friends should have a great influence upon an ingenuous mind; and I am willing to think you have a great sense of gratitude; and that, by considering what has been done for you, may excite a great ardour and fervency in your mind, to answer the expectations of those to whom you are so dear.

"But, Sir, I must tell you one thing more, that, by governing yourself according to the scheme of the foregoing letter, you most truly consult your own interest, which influences every man that is not corrupted by present pleasure to forfeit a future good. So that, if any regard to your happiness, as well as that of your parents, can prevail upon you, we shall certainly hear that you are upright and diligent in your business, sober and temperate in your enjoyments, and pious and religious in your whole conversation.

"I am very glad you have been confirmed; whereby your Christianity is become your own deliberate choice, the care of your godfathers and godmothers is discharged, and you have before God and man engaged to perform your part of the baptismal covenant.

"In order to discharge this more effectually, you have been admitted to the holy table, where God dispenses larger measures of His grace to those who approach with sincere intentions of doing their duty; and therefore I hope, now you have been initiated into the Christian mysteries, you will never neglect such opportunities which Providence may supply you with for the celebration of them.*

"I have nothing more to add but my hearty prayers to God, that He would be pleased to prosper your voyage, and bring you in safety to your desired port, since in all your ways you acknowledge him; and that he would direct your paths, and teach you to guide your affairs with discretion; that he would never leave you nor forsake you, but conduct you safely by His counsel through all the businesses and enjoyments, through all the temptations and troubles of this life, to that blessed place where our Lord Jesus liveth and reigneth for evermore.

"I am, with great sincerity, dear Cousin,

"Your very faithful humble servant,

"ROBERT NELSON."

"The Epiphany, 1713."

"Remember to be that in health, which you will wish to have been when you come to die."

* The following extract from the letter-book of the Levant Company, will indicate the opportunities of Holy Communion then enjoyed by their servants:

It may be interesting here to add that Robert Nelson's prayer and wishes for his young relative's success in life received in this case a complete and happy accomplishment. Gabriel Hanger returned to England with a large fortune, rebuilt the church of his native place, (1734,) represented successively Maidstone and Bridgewater in Parliament, and was raised in 1764 to the Irish peerage of Coleraine.* A tablet to his memory in Dryfield Church bears the severe but modest inscription, apparently dictated by himself: "Here lieth, in expectation of the last day, Gabriel Hanger, Lord Coleraine. What manner of man he was that day will discover. He died Jan. 24. 1773, aged seventy-five."

—"1712. Oct 7. Wm. Raye, Esq., late consul at Smyrna, deceased, having by his will bequeathed a service of communion plate to the chapel at Smyrna for the use of the Factory there, we have sent the same to you by the Sea Horse; and we recommend to you that all due care be had thereof. We likewise send you by this opportunity, as an addition to our library, the books desired by Mr. Lyde."

* His cousin, Ann Hanger, daughter of John Hanger, Esq., a merchant of London, had married Henry Hare, last Lord Coleraine of that line.

CHAPTER VI.

NELSON'S CORRESPONDENTS AND FRIENDS.

The Rev. Dr. Mapletoft.—Six Letters to him.—Humphry Wanley; his connection with Nelson.—Two Letters recommending him to a place in the Paper-office.—The Rev. Dr. Grabe; his opinions and works.—Nelson's character of him.—Two Letters to Lord Oxford respecting him.—Rev. Dr. Charlett, Master of University Coll. Oxon.—Eleven Letters to him.—Letter to Harley on the formation of a Tory Ministry.—Letter of Compliment to the Poet Prior.—Ralph Thoresby, the Yorkshire Antiquary.—Notices of Nelson in his Diary.—Rev. Wm. Reeves, Translator of the early Christian Apologists.—Extracts from his Prefatory Letter to Robert Nelson.—Rev. John Johnson, author of the "Propitiatory Oblation" and the "Unbloody Sacrifice."—Four Letters to him.

In addition to the attachment of his own family and relations, Nelson enjoyed the society of a large circle of admirers and friends, who were drawn to him by personal esteem for his character, or by sympathy in his charitable works. And the letters to his different correspondents, which have been preserved, with the particulars that may be gleaned from other sources, of his intimacy with them, will form a pleasing chapter in the history of his life.

At their head must be placed his old friend Dr. Mapletoft, to whom he addressed the following letters, in addition to those which have been previously quoted.*

"London, the 1st Jan., 94.

"My dear friend's affliction† has sensibly touch't me, and I heartily compassionate the severity of it: if I have not told you so sooner, 'twas out of a respectful indulgence

* "European Magazine," vol. xv. p. 187.

† Mapletoft had recently lost his wife, on the anniversary of their wedding day. Nov. 18, 1693.

to so just a concern ; for I think there should be some time allowed to calm our passions, even when our reason is obedient to the dispensation. I can assure you I am a great sharer in your loss, not only from what I knew, but from what I expected in so valuable a neighbour :—but God knows what is best for us, and a cheerful submission to his will is certainly the surest foundation of present ease and satisfaction, as well as the only method to make us eternally happy. I need not go about to prove this proposition to one who has often with great advantage cleared this sacred truth, and has convinced other people of their duty in this particular ; but give me leave, good sir, to urge one thing upon you, which is the necessity of confirming your doctrine by your example. We shall be apt to think there is very little force in those arguments our guides comfort us with in affliction, if we find they have not power to support their own spirits in the like sad circumstances ; and 'tis no small advantage to the Christian religion, that the blessed Jesus shewed us so perfect an example of what he taught. And you must not think us Laicks unreasonable, if we expect a more perfect virtue from those who have the honour and happiness to attend the altar : you are the light that must shine before us, and the salt wherewith we must be seasoned, and consequently have greater obligations to influence you than we can pretend to. I must confess I little doubt of finding you all of a piece ; but since great minds are sometimes shaken, pardon my earnest desire of seeing you fixt upon a rock, and if I am got beyond my sphere, put it upon the score of friendship, and reckon it as an effect of that value and esteem which I have always profest for you. I thank God, after a long illness, my wife is very much recovered, and is rather better in her health than she was before ; she talks of returning to Blackheath in February, but I am afraid it may be too soon ; but that depends upon the weather. I have sent you this day, by my gardener, a book lately printed, which I am sure was designed by the author to beget a Christian temper under sufferings, which most that fall under have great occasion of. I believe you would hardly have met with it, which made me take the liberty of presenting you. The season of the year obliges me to wish you all happiness,

but I assure you 'tis the constant temper of my mind towards you ; for I am, with great sincerity,

“ Your most affectionate humble Servant,

“ NELSON.

“ My wife and L. Berkeley are your humble servants .”

* “ August 7th, 1701, B. Heath.

“ DEAR SIR.—You consulted very much the ease and satisfaction of your friend, by the favourable account I received this day of the welfare of you and your family ; and if the present pleasure I feel would admit of any allay, the being without it so long might create some unquiet reflections. I am not surprized with Pony’s infirmities. I never laid any great stress upon his abilities, and have often endeavoured to abate that great value which you put upon him ; but experience is a surer guide than the uncertain guesses of our friends, and to that I shall leave you. Mr. Waller would certainly have entertained you very well, for Sir H. Short’s letter said a great deal ; and before you had parted, you would have convinced him how much you deserved it. You would have seen our mines in a very flourishing condition. We have had from thence lately very comfortable news.

“ The hot weather we have had has made me often pity you, for that extreme is not to be cured by the assistance of wit and money, of both which, God be thanked, you want not a sufficient share. My wife, who always remembers you with great kindness and respect, has been very much out of order ; but the Spaw waters have very much relieved her, which makes her persist in drinking them. I procured Bishop Fowler 5 guineas more for the assistance of Mr. Harris, which he took very kindly, and pressed me to set a day to dine with him, that we might not miss one another. He assured me that was the only reason ; but for all that, he treated me very generously, and we had six dishes of meat, besides a handsome service of fruit. I am very sensible of his great kindness towards me ; and

* “ European Magazine,” vol. xv. p. 274, 5.

though I have deserved it from some of his order where I have not found it, yet his Lordship's (*sic*) is all grace and favour.

"Your Corporation* has done nothing considerable besides raising money to pay the charges of their being a body. Our Society† having a good sum by them upon this occasion, we thought we could not do better than discharge part of Dr. Bray's debt, to which I took some pains to dispose some of our members; and I made it appear 'twas a service to the Society thus to dispose of money that lay by us dead rather than pay interest to Dr. Bray, which by this method would be saved. I am confident I have your consent in this matter; and indeed I know not how to answer to myself that discouragement, that worthy zealous person finds from some of his own order. I am sure he has been one of the greatest instruments for propagating Christian knowledge this age has produced. The libraries abroad, our Society, and the Corporation, are owing to his unwearied solicitations. If you return near my Lord Weymouth's, you may find him and Bishop Ken both there, and you may be sure of a good reception from such a lord.

"Our neighbour Stanhope was delivered of a daughter last Saturday, and in a fair way of doing well: she had no melancholy anticipations this time of the painful operation, but preserv'd her vigour and spirits to the last, which every body would wish well to, if she knew how to keep them under a prudent government. My mother went ten days ago to Tunbridge, to accompany my cousin Lordel; but Sir Richard Blackmore, whom I consulted, forbid her drinking the waters, having observed that they do not so well

* The *Incorporated Society for the Propagation of the Gospel*, of which Dr. Mapletoft was a Vice-President.

† The S.P.C.K. Minutes of Nov. 9, 1699: "Resolved, that it is the opinion of this Society, that the sum of 400 and odd pounds expended by Dr. Bray, has been by him advanced towards the propagation of Christian knowledge in the plantations, upon the credit of public benefactions. Resolved that the interest of the said 400 and odd pounds, after a rate of five per cent., do commence from Michaelmas last past, and be paid to Dr. Bray and his assigns, out of the first contributions as shall be lodged in the Society for the purposes before mentioned."

agree with persons of her age. I venture this letter according to the date of yours, and should be willing to hazard more rather than to omit shewing you any testimony of the value and esteem I have for you. 'Twould favour of too much formality to beg any excuse for this long letter, especially since I design it as a mark of that kindness which is with pleasure paid you by, dear Sir,

“Your most faithful friend and servant,

“NELSON.”

*“REVEREND SIR.—You had received an answer sooner to your very obliging lines of the 13th from Aspeden, but that I am at present in my very agreeable retirement at this place, where I find in my lady the kindness of a mother, and in her house the same freedom as if I were in my own; these circumstances with the native pleasures of the seat, and its being frequented by little or no company, give it a particular relish to me, and not the less for being envied by few or none. The Rector here is a very good scholar, and a man of admirable parts, whose conversation is my great diversion; he labours very hard at present in a beautiful translation of the Ancient Apologies for Christianity, which I have put him upon, and adorns them with admirable notes, useful and profitable for all readers, which he throws at the bottom of each page. He will have an admirable preface about the right use of the Fathers, as a necessary introduction to his undertaking; wherein, if I mistake not, he entirely confutes Daillé, and exposes his whipt cream with some salt; and plainly proves that his arguments militate with equal force against the Scriptures as against the Fathers, and consequently prove nothing by proving too much. But enough of this to whet your appetite for the future entertainment.

“As to Mr. Ostervald’s Treatise against Uncleannefs, I entirely agree with you in your character of it. I read it about three months ago, and esteem it much the best that ever I met with upon the subject. This and your commands would have had a great influence upon me, if

† “European Magazine,” vol. xv. p. 433.

a friend of ours had not made that attempt needlessly ; for it is about three months that the book has appeared in English, being translated when there were very few copies of the original in town. The worthy clergyman who has taken pains to such good purpose is Mr. Spinckes ; and though I cannot say I have compared it with the original, yet I know it is well translated by its reading so well, and its appearing to be an original in English, few or no Gallicisms showing themselves. He has introduced it with a very handsome and solid preface, relating to the same subject ; but his name is not affixed for reasons that the engaging booksellers gave him.

“I hope you may live to publish it in Latin, for the benefit of the Christian world, it being a subject, wherein I am afraid too many fail from want of right notions in that matter.

“I have with a great deal of pleasure read your Sermons, which are certainly very proper for our design, though they cannot be ready so soon as we intend to give the world a taste of this Charity ; for we shall out of hand set up fifty-two parochial libraries, which at £16 a library, will amount to £832. We have some thousands of volumes in our repository, and I depend upon your usual goodness, for some considerable encouragement.

“I am glad to find my attempt of doing good * has had any success. I heartily bless God, that he has been pleased to make me an instrument of reviving decayed primitive piety among us, and to His name be the glory. It is a sort of satisfaction which agrees with me better than the laurels of mighty conquerors, whom I often pity rather than admire. The fifth edition is just finished, so that in four years and a half, there has been 10,000 printed. It is just now going to the press in Welsh, translated by Mr. Williams of Denbigh, formerly the late Earl of Berkeley’s chaplain, and Mr. Mapletoft’s neighbour sometimes at Bugden ; and I wonder the bookseller will venture upon printing 500, but he is well known in Wales, and has lately printed the Common Prayer-book in that language.

* His “Companion for the Festivals and Fasts.”

"I hope you will not defer finishing the legacy you design for your Parish. Those particular addresses have an admirable effect; the people think themselves under greater obligations to read, and are more inclined to comply with those advices, which they think purely framed for themselves; besides it will remain as a standing monument of your care for their souls, and to which you may appeal at the Day of Judgment.

"I find, Sir, the pleasure of conversing with an old friend carries me a great way; though I hope you will not think the letter too long since it has not appeared so to me in writing. Pray God, return you safe to your own home. I cannot forbear wishing that you may sometimes be mindful of me, who has always had a great value for you, and continues to be with great sincerity,

"Reverend Sir,

"Your most faithful friend and humble servant,

"ROBERT NELSON.

"Cranford, July 17, 1708.

"My humble service to my worthy friend Mr. Mapletoft, with whom this will, I hope, find you, it being the first post since I received yours."

* "REVEREND SIR.—I am very glad to understand that my letter, directed to Huntingdon, came safe to your hands. It satisfied those enquiries you made, and, I hope, confirmed you in the opinion of my readiness, upon all occasions to give fresh testimonies of my respect and esteem of such a friend as you are. What you are pleased to call plain inartificial discourses, I judge most proper for the generality of auditors. I think a sermon may be too correct for a mixt assembly; only those that thoroughly understand the subject can be affected with the beauties of it; but if I would instruct to purpose in the pulpit, I should study the popular style, as best turned to do most good. Your discourse of *doing good* must be still in Mr. Fox's hands, for I have only one volume of your sermons,

* "European Magazine," vol. xvi. p. 8.

which shall be left at Dr. Butler's when I return to town. He is at present at his living at Boscomb, near Salisbury, famous once for being the residence of the judicious Hooker. I have no correspondence with Mr. Cæsar, and therefore shall not take the good work out of your hands. I was mightily pleased with an answer a clergyman of great figure made me when I asked him if he had read Mr. Ostervald *contre l'Impureté*. He said he had read it with great satisfaction, and was sorry he had not read it sooner; which implies more than can be well expressed. I return you my thanks for your benefaction towards the libraries: if you will be pleased to pay it to Mr. Henry Hoar, goldsmith, in Fleet-street, it will be lodged in a proper place for the purpose you design, and when the trustees meet you will have their united thanks: you need not mention as yet the persons concerned in this charity. I am obliged to you for remembering me at your most serious hours, and shall constantly pray that, by a patient continuance in well doing, you may obtain the crown of life. God has blest you with a soft and gentle old age, and I hope will continue it unto the end. Though true Christian perfection seems to me to consist very much in an entire and ready conformity to the will of God, and prosperity and adversity is more or less grievous or agreeable as it advances or hinders our great end; though the way be very rugged that leads to heaven, it is certainly the best, provided it be the shortest and the surest. I am, reverend Sir,

“Your most faithful friend and humble servant,

“ROB. NELSON.

“Cranford, 17th Aug., 1708.

“Humble service to Dr. Gastril and your daughter.”

*“REVEREND SIR.—By a letter I received last night from the Countess of Berkeley, who with my Lord are at present at Berkeley Castle, I am desired to consult you concerning your nephew, whether he could, without prejudice

* “European Magazine,” vol. xvi. p. 97.

to his affairs, attend my Lord at Berkeley Castle this winter, whereby they might try how they liked one another ; and if it proved agreeable to both parties, nothing but your nephew's preferment would part them. If your nephew should resolve to go, I would have him quit nothing till he has made a trial of the circumstances proposed. The respect my Lord and my Lady bear to the clergy, and the relation Mr. Mapletoft bears to you will secure him of good usage while he is my Lord's chaplain. I have mended the erratas according to the paper you sent me, and give you a great many thanks for the very agreeable present you made me. Such truly pious and Christian discourses* must particularly affect your friends and acquaintance, because your own example preaches to them at the same time, though all strangers to you that seriously consider them, must be influenced by the great reasonableness and piety of the performance. It is a very acceptable legacy to your friends and parishioners, who will be sure always to pay a particular regard to it ; and it is concluding a pious and devout life with an odour of sanctity. I recommend myself to your prayers, and am with great respect,

" Reverend Sir,

" Your most faithful friend, and humble servant,

" ROB. NELSON.

" 29 Aug., 1710."

† " REVEREND SIR.—I thank you for your very agreeable present, and I shall take all opportunities to further the dispersing so useful a treatise. Your printer must give notice of it in all the papers. I will endeavour to convince him that his interest obliges him to that expense. When your servant was here yesterday, I was at Lewisham, when the Bishop of Sarum married his eldest son to Mrs. Mary

* "The Principles and Duties of the Christian Religion considered and explained, in order to retrieve and promote the Christian Life, or that holiness without which no man shall see the Lord. Divided into 26 chapters, one whereof being read every Lord's day ; the whole will be read over twice in the year. By John Mapletoft, D.D., Vicar of St. Lawrence Jewry. 1710."

† "European Magazine," vol. xvi. p. 167.

Stanhope. There is a reasonable prospect of happiness. The misfortune generally is, that young people expect too much, and their disappointment is generally owing to their own false opinion of things. These two young people have both very good sense, and tempers very well suited for one another, which with their clerical education will go a great (way) to make them happy.
I believe we are very nigh a peace, and if the pa(rliament) judges it a good one, we private people must acquiesce; though there is such a spirit of discord gone forth, that nothing but a war, which we are not able to maintain, will satisfy some people. God in his good time soften all men's minds, and reconcile them to one another!

“I am, my dear friend,

“Your most faithful humble servant,

“ROB. NELSON.

“June 4, 1712.

“To the Rev. Dr. Mapletoft,
at Greenwich, Kent.”

Among Nelson's humbler friends was the well-known antiquary, Humphrey Wanley. He was the son of the Rev. Nathaniel Wanley, Vicar of Holy Trinity, Coventry, where he was born in the year 1671. The poverty of his father obliged him to breed his son to a trade; but his natural tastes led him to the study of old printed books and MSS., in deciphering which he acquired great facility and judgment. Dr. Lloyd, Bishop of Lichfield and Coventry, took notice of his talents, and sent him to St. Edmund's Hall, Oxford, where he assisted Dr. Mill, the Principal, in his collations of the New Testament. He found another patron in Dr. Charlett, Master of University, who took him into his college and house, and obtained for him the appointment of under-keeper of the Bodleian. Leaving Oxford for London, he was employed by Dr. Hickes, at whose instance he travelled over the kingdom in

search of Anglo-Saxon MSS. By Hickes's introduction he was made known to Nelson, and became his confidential agent and literary factotum. Thus if Nelson distrusts his scholarship in French at the meetings of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, he begs Wanley to "let the French letter of Ostervald's, and from Geneva, be translated for me against next Thursday." If he has to prepare an inscription for a tablet to his wife's memory in Cranford Church, he desires to see Wanley "at his house to-morrow morning, about nine o'clock," to talk about it. If his friend Grabe's decease entails upon him some embarrassing business, he writes to Wanley, "I beg you would let me see you any morning, as early as you can. I want to talk with you about Dr. Grabe's affairs." If, on the other hand, Wanley was candidate for a vacant post, soliciting his appointment as Secretary to the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, or desirous of changing it for a more advantageous post with the Society for the Propagation of the Gospel; if he was endeavouring to succeed Dr. Smith in the custody of the Cottonian Library, or Mr. Chamberlayne at the Paper Office, Nelson was the friend upon whose interest he relied, and who never failed to exert himself in his behalf. Thus, upon the latter occasion, he writes to Wanley:—

"SIR.—I wish I had more interest upon this occasion, that I might gratify my own inclinations in serving you more effectually. I desire you to peruse the enclosed letter, and if you think it to the purpose, deliver it yourself. My lord lodges in Charles Street, at the Surgeons' Arms, near St. James's Square. Though I would not endeavour to have Mr. Chamberlayne turned out, yet if he has not interest to preserve that post, I shall not scruple to promote your pretensions. You may get Dean Hickes to apply to the Earl of Clarendon, and if Bishop Nicholson will be vigorous, he may engage Sir Christopher Musgrave, who

has a good interest in the Earls of Nottingham and Rochester. I wish you good success, and shall be glad to hear what progress you make.

“I am, your humble servant,

“NELSON.

“B. Heath, 22nd June, 1702.”

Enclosed was the following :—

“Blackheath, 22 June, 1702.

“MY LORD.—Though the solicitations and importunities of pretenders is an inconvenience that attends such as are in great stations, yet the capacity of doing good and promoting men of principles and worth, makes sufficient amends for that alloy. This my Lord, I thought necessary to premise when I designed to recommend the bearer, Mr. Humphrey Wanley, to your Lordship’s favour and encouragement. Mr. Chamberlayne, I hear, will be put out of the Paper-office, and if that gentleman has not sufficient interest to keep his post, I believe few will be found better qualified to succeed than the person who now presents himself to your Lordship. He is skilled in many parts of learning and languages, and excels in the knowledge of all sorts of Manuscripts. He is a man of right principles in reference to the Church and State; so that if your Lordship will countenance the applications that are made by his friends to the Earls of Nottingham and Rochester, he may hope to succeed in what he is well qualified to discharge. I hope, my Lord, you will pardon the liberty I take, when I assure your Lordship it proceeds from a great inclination to see worthy men employed, and to hear your Lordship esteemed their great Mæcenas.

“I am, with all imaginable respect, my Lord,

“Your Lordship’s most obedient servant,

“NELSON.

“To Lord * * * *.”

Another of Nelson’s intimate friends was the pious and learned Dr. Grabe, who was particularly recommended

to him by the preference which he had so remarkably avowed for the episcopal regimen of the English Church. John Ernest Grabe was originally a member of the Lutheran Church of Prussia, having been born in 1660, at Königsburg, where his father was University Professor. His study of Christian antiquity led him to great dissatisfaction with the Lutheran Communion, as wanting those Holy orders and that Apostolic Succession, which he conceived to be a note of a true Church; and he left his native place accordingly in 1695, with the intention of joining the Church of Rome, as more conformable in these points to the precedent of the Primitive Church. From this step he was dissuaded by Spener the Pietist divine, who pointed to the Church of England, as a Communion in which he might enjoy all the satisfaction of a duly authorised ministry, unalloyed by the corruptions of the Romish Church. He accordingly repaired to England, where he received a pension of £100 from King William, took priest's orders, became a chaplain of Christ Church, and applied himself to Theological labours. In 1698 he published a collection of Patristic Tracts, under the title of *Spicilegium SS. Patrum*; induced (he says) to this compilation by the consideration that there could be no better expedient towards Christian union than to reflect on the practices and tenets of the primitive fathers; sentiments which induced him also to carry through the press a new edition of Justin Martyr's Apologies, and of the Works of Irenæus. His great reputation induced Queen Anne to select him to edit the Septuagint from the Alexandrian MSS. in St. James's Library, adding upon the occasion a present of £60 at the instance of Harley his patron. In 1703 he was entrusted with the task of editing, with annotations, a collection of Bull's Latin Works; at which time we may suppose him to have gained the friendship of Nelson, if they had not pre-

viously been made known to one another by their mutual friend Smalridge. His life was one of laborious study, as well as of great abstemiousness and devotion, so as to conciliate the respect of even those who, like Kennet,* felt no sympathy whatever with his theological opinions. His friends, as Nelson, Smalridge, and Hickes, were enthusiastic in their admiration and esteem for his character and learning.

“Who can mention Dr. Grabe,” exclaims the former, in his *Life of Bishop Bull*, “without a deep and particular concern for the loss of so great a man, in the very prime of his age, when we expected to reap the fruit of his indefatigable studies, which were chiefly conversant about Christian antiquities; and who by an eminent author† is very aptly compared ‘to a great and mighty prince, who dying, leaves behind him many plans of noble and curious buildings; foundations of others; others erected above-ground; some half, others almost, and others perfectly finished. Such are

* Kennet (MSS. collections, vol. xvi. pp. 345, &c.) has several curious particulars of Dr. Grabe, whom he viewed with another eye than Nelson did. Thus he writes: “Saturday night, Nov. 3, 1711, departed this life, Dr. John Ernest Grabe, the most learned and pious gentleman that this age has produced.” “Dr. Grabe buried on Thursday night, Nov. 8, 1711, at St. Pancras Church, attended by the Prussian envoy, Dr. Smalridge, Dr. Pelling, Dr. Sherlock, Dr. Gasparth, Dr. Marshall, and other divines. He lay long in St. Paul’s churchyard under the Surgeon’s hands, for an abscess in his belly, brought on by his studies and fasting.” He complains that though a chaplain of Christ Church, Oxford, he yet never received the communion in our Church, “objecting that we wanted the essential form of praying God the Father to send down the Holy Ghost to sanctify and transmute the elements. He was much for external rites in Confession and Absolution. He absolved a penitent in the vestry of Bow Church, with prostration of the person and laying by his own wig, and kneeling and bowing to the earth three times, and imposition of both hands, and all other possible visible signs of profound ceremony. On his death, he desired a solemn absolution from the minister, and would have his head bare, and be held up in a kneeling posture. Indeed his piety and our charity may cover all this. But otherwise I know not what rule required it at his hands.” He adds, “Poor Dr. Grabe’s receiving the absolution from Dr. Smalridge, the communion from Dr. Hickes, and being buried in St. Pancras Church (where the Roman Catholics dying in or near this city have been commonly interred), occasions talk.”

† Dr. Hickes.

the remains left us by this great master builder, as may appear by the catalogue of his manuscripts.'

"All the learned, who could best judge of his great talents, readily offer him that incense of praise which is justly due to his profound erudition; whereby he was qualified to enlighten the dark and obscure parts of ecclesiastical history, to trace the original frame and state of the Christian Church, and to restore the sacred volumes, the pillars of our faith, to their primitive perfection.

"He had so great a zeal for promoting the ancient government and discipline of the Church, among all those who had separated themselves from the corruptions and superstitions of the Church of Rome, that he formed a plan, and made some advances in it, for restoring the episcopal order and office in the territories of the King of Prussia his sovereign; and proposed, moreover, to introduce a liturgy, much after the model of the English service, into that king's dominions; and recommended likewise the use of the English liturgy itself, by the means of some of his friends, to a certain neighbouring court. By which means he would have united the two main bodies of Protestants, in a more perfect and apostolical reformation, than that upon which either of them did yet stand, and would thereby have fortified the common cause of their protestation against the errors of popery. But yet his learned studies did not so engross his mind, as to prevent his daily attending the hours of public prayer, to which purpose he always chose his lodgings near a church: neither did the applause he received from the greatest men of the age so exalt him, but that he readily condescended to converse with those of the lowest understanding, when he could be any ways serviceable to them in their spiritual concerns.

"He was justly esteemed one of the greatest divines of the age; yet the great modesty of his temper, and the profound humility of his mind, made him prefer others before himself. He laid the chiefest stress upon the constant practice of the virtues of the Christian life, and was also a strict observer of all the rules of the apostolical times, and of the Catholic usages of the first Christians. He bore his last sickness, which deprived the world of so great a treasure,

with most exemplary patience, and submission to the will of God; and exercised all those acts of devotion, which the best of men are zealously intent upon in their last labours for immortality. He was very severe upon himself, even for those common human frailties, which are apt to cleave to those of the greatest eminence for their sanctity, and, with true compunction, bewailed the neglects and omissions of his duty, which from the unseasonable resort of company, he sometimes was forced to. And yet he thanked God from the bottom of his heart, that through the assistance of His grace, he had so far overcome those temptations which he had met with in life, that he never prostituted his conscience for the sake of gain, or defiled his body, which he always had kept pure from the mortal sin of uncleanness. He had constantly every day, and frequently several times in the day, the office of the visitation of the sick, with some proper collects of his own choosing, used by his bed-side, and he commonly desired the imposition of the priest's hands, when the absolution or blessing was pronounced over him. He received the communion of our Lord's body and blood with great devotion, several times during his severe visitation, to fortify him in his passage to eternity; and was at last set at liberty from the bondage of his mortal body, upon the 3rd of November, 1711, in the 46th year of his age. The occasion of his death was a bruise which he got in his side, at the place of his liver, when he made his last journey to Oxford in the stage coach, in prosecuting the noble work he had in hand; which accident being neglected at first, upon his return to London became thus fatal."

He was buried in the chancel of St. Pancras Church, his friend Smalridge reading the funeral office, and a concourse of English divines attending his remains. He exhibited his confidence in Nelson's friendship, by appointing him executor of his will, desiring him to obtain the assistance of Francis Lee, in preparing his manuscripts for Hickes' perusal. Nelson, on his part, was not wanting to the memory of his friend. He was forward to vindicate him

from some aspersions upon his character, which had been industriously circulated, and which had prejudiced him in the estimation of Bishop Wake*; and when Hickes published a posthumous tract of Grabe's against Whiston, with some account of the author's life and writings, Nelson solicited Harley's patronage of the work in the following letter :†

“ June 26, 1712.

“ MY LORD.—It is very fit that everything that is published of Dr. Grabe's should be laid before your Lordship, because you were pleased, in a very distinguishing manner, both in his life and at his death, to shew yourself to be his patron.

“ The learned prefatory discourse of Dean Hickes gives him a title humbly to beg your lordship's acceptance of the whole performance.‡ The catalogue of the MSS. that Dr. Grabe hath left behind him, I presume to offer to your lordship, as what will enlarge your opinion of his extensive learning and capacity, and at the same time afford your lordship some agreeable entertainment. I have returned to Dr. Bentley the books which Dr. Grabe had borrowed from the Queen's library, which I think myself obliged to acquaint your lordship with, because I understand you had the trouble of an application upon that subject. I shall not venture to take any step toward printing the remaining part of the Septuagint, till I have received your lordship's directions in that matter. I am, with all imaginable respect, your lordship's most obedient and

“ Most humble servant,

“ ROBERT NELSON.”

* Wake's "Miscellaneous Papers," vol. i. (in the library of Christ Church, Oxon), contain a letter to Wake from Potter, then Regius Professor of Divinity, mentioning a certificate which Nelson had sent him from Smith the bookfeller, avouching Grabe, who had lodged in his house, to be 'a mortified, chaste, and very good man,' by way of counteracting these aspersions on his character.

† Nichols' "Anecdotes of Bowyer," p. 5.

‡ Some instances of the defects and omissions of Mr. Whiston's Collection of Testimonies from the Scriptures and the Fathers, against the true Deity of

And one of the last letters* which Nelson wrote was to forward the completion of the monument which Lord Oxford had directed to be put up in Westminster Abbey to the memory of his friend.

"MY LORD,—I have endeavoured several times to pay my duty to your lordship, since you have retired from public affairs, but never had the happiness of meeting with your lordship. I am obliged to acquaint you that Mr. Bird has made considerable progress in Dr. Grabe's monument, and that part of my agreement with him was that he should receive fifty pounds this Michaelmas, which he has put me in mind of. I hope to bring the whole expense under what your lordship was willing to bestow. Pray God protect your lordship from the assaults of your enemies, and keep you safe against all their attempts. I am, with great respect,

"Your Lordship's most obedient, and

"Most humble servant,

"ROB. NELSON."

"Oct. 4, 1714."

Nelson's friendship with Hickes, or Wanley, may have procured him the acquaintance of Dr. Charlett, master of University College, Oxford, who, in his younger days had been patronised by the former, and who had himself befriended the latter during his residence at Oxford. Charlett would have an additional hold upon Nelson's sympathies by his Tory politics, which occasioned his dismissal from his chaplaincy to the King, shortly after the accession of George I. The following are some of the letters addressed by Nelson to this academical correspondent :—

† "REVEREND SIR,—I was very unfortunate not to see your worthy neighbour the president of C. C. C., when he was in town; but your obliging letter of the 22nd April was left at my house, whereby I perceive you received from

the Son and the Holy Ghost; to which is prefixed a discourse, wherein some account is given of the Doctor and of his MSS. by Geo. Hickes, D.D. 1712."

* Nichol's "Anecdotes of Bowyer," p. 6.

† "Aubrey's Letters," vol. i. 62.

me the first news of the Armenian Archbishop ; who designs, as I am informed, to set out this week for Oxford with a cargo of those books he has printed in his own language for the promoting piety and learning, which he designs as a present to the public library. I need not entreat your favour in his behalf ; your own obliging disposition will prompt you to do him what service lies in your power. He has not yet procured above 200, as yet, to his admirable designs, neither, as I understand, does he aim at above 100 more, which shews that he is not very intent upon gain. I must beg of you to recommend him particularly in my name to our worthy friend the president, who is able and ready for good works. I rather choose this way of making the Archbishop known to you, than by sending a letter by himself, because this leaves you more at liberty.

"I have just finished Dr. Potter's discourse of Church-government, which I look upon as a most admirable performance, and which will, I hope, by the blessing of God, rectify those loose notions which too many learned and judicious men have entertained in that matter. I am glad such a book comes from that quarter, for I apprehend that set of men stand most in need of it. By my consent every candidate for holy orders should be obliged to give a perfect account of it before he is ordained, and then we might hope the same notions by degrees might be instilled into the laity. The Dean's admirable book* is this day published, and I am not a little pleased to see that he and Dr. Potter should agree in ecclesiastical principles. But of all this, Sir, you will make a better judgment yourself, tho', when our minds are full, we cannot help venting ourselves to our friends.

"I am very much concerned that the Charity Schools are not yet set up in your University ; certainly it deserves the consideration of so great and weighty a body. I am, reverend Sir,

"Your faithful, humble servant,

"ROB. NELSON."

"22 May, 1707,
"Ascension-day."

* Hickes's "Two Treatises, on the Christian Priesthood, and Episcopal Order;" the second edition of which, with a preface in answer to Tindal, appeared in 1707.

* "REVEREND SIR,—I do most heartily congratulate the advantageous addition the Providence of God has made to your circumstances. I find all your friends rejoice upon this occasion,† and indeed, all good men have reason to express their satisfaction, because a plentiful fortune fits best upon those who have generous and obliging inclinations.

"I owe a great many thanks to you in particular, for your kindness to the venerable Archbishop; you did a great deal of justice to the University in the respect you paid him and in the handsome present you provided for him: he retains a grateful sense of it, and his nephew expressed himself very fully upon that subject before his departure.

"I hope to find a way of addressing the Vice-Chancellor about the Charity Schools. It is very fit they should take their rise from him. When Dr. Gaftrell's Sermon is printed, and the account that is to be annexed to it, I will take care it shall be laid before him.

"I was very sorry I was out of town, when you did me the favour of a visit; my worthy neighbour took care to let me know the kindness you designed me. May you long enjoy the good living you are in possession of, and speedily obtain, what you have reason farther to expect.

"I am, Reverend Sir,

"Your most faithful humble servant,

"ROB. NELSON."

"12 July, 1707,

"Ormond Street."

‡ "REVEREND SIR,—I rejoice very much at the progress that is made toward the setting up Charity Schools in Oxford. It will be much to the honour of the University, as well as for the benefit of the poor inhabitants. I shall be glad to know to what sum your

* "Aubrey's Letters," vol. i. 63.

† Charlett had been instituted to the living of Hambleton, Bucks, June 28, 1707.

‡ "Aubrey's Letters," vol. i. 64.

subscriptions amount already, and if you want any assistance from London as to the methods of erecting the schools; I will undertake to send a person on purpose, rather than the work should miscarry.

"As to the case you put in relation to the Sunday and Holyday Service; which ought to have the preference when they meet?—I think, if I mistake not, our Rubric has determined it. Among the orders for reading the Holy Scriptures, there are these words:—'And note that whensoever Proper Psalms or Lessons are appointed, then the Psalms and Lessons of ordinary course appointed in the Psalter and Kalendar, if they be different, shall be omitted for that time.' The same discretion is given in the Rubric about the First Lesson; from which I argue that the Holyday Lessons being the proper Lessons and the Sunday those of ordinary course, the first ought to take the place of the latter, by which all the rest of the service ought to be regulated. In the case of Christmas Day which sometimes falls upon a Sunday, it is never disputed and I believe it will hold in all other Holy days, when the Sunday Collect may be used with that of the Holy day. My good neighbour, who is much your humble servant, is of the same opinion; and I am, with great respect,

"Reverend Sir,

"Your most obedient humble servant,

"ROB. NELSON."

"St. Simon and St. Jude,
"1707."

* "REVEREND SIR,—I have been lately for some time absent from London, and returned but this evening, which is the true reason I have deferred answering yours of the 4th instant, which has lain upon my table ever since.

"We want Rubrics upon several occasions and particularly in the case you put about Advent Sunday, and St. Andrew's falling upon the same day; but I can tell you the Church of Rome put the First Sunday in Advent in the number of the Sundays of the *primæ classis*,

* "Aubrey's Letters," vol. i. 65.

as Easter Sunday, Whit Sunday, and Trinity Sunday, which take place of all other Holy days; so that according to that rule, the Epistle and Gospel for the Sunday ought to be read, though both Collects may be used, but this is all I know in that matter.

"I should be glad to have a particular account of your subscription, which other hands make amount to above £100 a year.

"I am,

"Your most faithful humble servant,

"R. NELSON."

"St. Andrew's Eve, 1707,
"Ormond Street."

* "REVEREND SIR,—I have received both your letters, 25th February and 1st March, in an agreeable retirement near London; a bad cough drove me hither, and Lent keeps me here. I am very glad your schools go on so well; if you have proper masters, they will understand the best methods of teaching. If at my return I can be serviceable to you, you shall not fail to hear from me. Lady Guildford was brought a-bed six weeks agoe, I think 'twas a son. I look upon St. Mathias in the Church of England to be fixt to the 24th. I know in the Church of Rome 'tis moveable on leap-year. I should have been glad to have known what satisfaction Dr. Potter had given to the University: his own merit must make his way, when another would have been more agreeable.

"I am, Rev^d. Sir,

"Your most faithfull humble servant,

"R. NELSON."

"Cranford,
"9th Mar., 1707."

"REVEREND SIR,—I find myself obliged to return you my humble thanks for two admirable sermons, which are very fit to be made publick, and do great justice and honour to that venerable body from whence they proceed.

* This and the following letters to Charlett are now first printed from the MSS. in the Bodleian Library.

It is a great comfort to me to see that when preaching begins to dwindle so very much in town, it flourishes with so much vigour in the University. For our young divines study spruceness in their discourses more than solidity, they give you a short but an imperfect essay upon some virtue, but very seldom treat a point in divinity substantially, or confirm it by the explication of several passages of Scripture, which I take to be most edifying. I think Mr. Lupton has in most places argued very strongly, and expressed himself with great clearness and perspicuity; and in the main not without respect to that great man from whom he differs in the way and manner of proving the Article, tho' I am satisfied they agree in the belief of it, as is very clear from several other passages of Archbishop Tillotson's works. The letter you mentioned I copied* long ago from the original, and think it very perfect in its kind; I have often wished that all his letters writ upon particular subjects were collected and printed; they would make a most agreeable entertainment, for he had the happiness of treating any subject with great fullness in short, and at the same time avoided all obscurity to which such attempts are often subject. I yesterday by chance met with your Vice-Chancellor, whose conduct in the University I have very much admired, and whose zeal in promoting the Charity Schools I particularly took notice of.

"I am, Reverend Sir,

"Your most faithful humble servant,

"ROB. NELSON."

"Ormond Street,

"4th Aug., 1708."

"REVEREND SIR,—I have received the favour of both your letters of the 10th and 20th instant, which found me under a severe fit of the gout, which makes me a cripple

* At the end of the "Christian Exercise" (to which Nelson wrote a preface), is printed "A Copy of a Letter from the Dean of Canterbury, Dr. Tillotson (afterwards Archbishop), to a friend of his, who laid very ill of a languishing distemper, whereof he died; which was transcribed by Mr. Nelson with his own hand, being communicated to him by the Author, his very particular friend and correspondent."

in both my feet. I inquired about printing the Church Catechism by itself, a right which I perceive the University has parted with, and therefore I have nothing farther to say upon that point. I return my hearty thanks for the trouble I have given you upon this account. I have Calepin's Dictionary, in a very thick folio, which contains upon eight of the modern languages. I never read that paraphrase upon the Psalms which you mention.

"I am, Rev^d. Sir,

"Your faithfull humble servant,

"ROB. NELSON."

"St. Mathias."

"REVEREND SIR,—I beg the favour of you to lend me, or to borrow for me, if it is not in your own study, Fillefachus's Com^{te} upon Vincentius Lirinensis; it is a book in quarto, printed in 1619, as I think at Paris, for he was a doctor of the Sorbonne. I know if you can meet with it in any library except the Bodleian, you have interest to procure it, and I shall take it for a great favour, because I have use for it. I inclose you two letters from Mr. Wesley and his wife to Mr. Henry Hoare, which give I beleive a very true account of their calamitous circumstances. If any charitable gentleman in your neighbourhood will contribute to their releif, Mr. Hoare receives for them. Some people of quality have already sent in their benefactions. I continue still confined by the gout, though I am upon the mending hand; this gives me the advantage of seeing my freinds, and my worthy neighbour the Dean very often, to my satisfaction.

"I am, Reverend Sir,

"Your faithfull humble servant,

"ROB. NELSON."

"3 March, 1704,

"Ormond Street."

"REVEREND SIR,—I return you my humble thanks for refreshing my memory with many beautifull passages in the poets of the polite age, and I must own, that I am not so

mortified as not to relish the entertainment. Besides, you have taken care to raise the gusto by prefixing your undeserved good opinion of me and your good wishes. I will take the liberty to make you a present by the Munday's coach of a book of another kind, which relates to the propagation of the Gospel in the East, which opens a noble scene of comfort and joy to all those that are sensible of the inestimable benefits of Christianity. This best of charities has been solicited by private hands for about two months, and there has been collected between 4 and £500, and by these East India ships that are now going for those parts, they have supplied the missionaries with a printing press, 600 weight of letters, 100 rems of paper, a printer who is paid for a year, several copies of the Gospel in Portuguese, which with a quantity of pieces of eight, makes the expence amount to above £400. The particulars of this mission you will learn from the letters. I desire you to deliver the other book to Sir Philip Sydenham, and those unbound you may bestow where you think they will do most good. Mr. Reeves's Apologys are for Baliol college, which are justly due as you know very well. I do not question but that you have the names of the twelve new chaplains; there are four Christchurch men among the number, as you will easily perceive. My most humble service to Sir Philip and to those who are so kind as to wish me well.

"I am, with great esteem, Reverend Sir,

"Your faithful humble servant,

"ROB. NELSON.

"The Convocation will receive the Queen's licence next Wednesday to go upon business, and I hope that venerable body will convince the world that they are of consequence."

"20 Jan., 1743."

"REVEREND SIR,—According to your directions, I have sent the two letters you committed to my care, and return you my humble thanks for the concern you show for my health. I am very glad the Queen is so vigorous as to pursue her sport so frequently. I hope it will secure her

health, which is of great importance to the happiness of our country ; neither am I less pleased with that deference she pays to the clergy, which was always an honour to the greatest of emperors. I send you the enclosed* that you may subscribe yourself, and procure subscriptions from others that are charitably disposed. It is for the sake of Mr. Williams I solicit, and have engaged for a 100 copies myself. Mr. Jennings and I set forward from Mr. Cook's near Uxbridge towards Bath next Tuesday, and shall be that night at Oxford, with a design to spend two days there. Your absence will be a great alloy to my pleasure in that place, but I shall meet friends with whom I shall remember Dr. Charlet. I forgot to acquaint you that my Lord Keeper has bestowed Reading upon my friend Mr. Reeves, which generally gives satisfaction. I wish you the continuance of your health, and am with great esteem,

“ Reverend Sir,

“ Your most faithful humble servant,

“ ROB. NELSON.”

“ 9th Aug., 1711,

“ The Election day of the Emperour.”

“ REVEREND SIR,—I was very well pleased to see the printed account of your schools, but I did not know to whose favour I owed it till I received your letter. It was indeed left at my house by one sent from Mr. Bishop, but that did not clear to whom I had the obligation. I hope you found Mr. Reeves pretty well. I fancy you wait at court together, because he is of your month, and talks of appearing in his station the 1st Aug. The charity of supplying Scotland with Common Prayer-books may be of great consequence, for tho' the bishops when established there were not able to bring in our liturgy, yet when that has got good ground among them 'tis to be hoped it may help to restore them. I know you are a curious man, and well skilled as in ancient so in modern history ; and there-

* Apparently, a subscription list for the “ Festivals and Fasts ” in Welsh, translated by Mr. Williams. See p. 166.

fore I must desire you that if you have any memoirs relating to Bp. Bull, that you would [be] pleased to communicate them to me, for when I shall publish his posthumous works, I shall be obliged to give some account of him in my preface. One Mr. Thomas, of Christchurch, was an intimate friend of Bp. Bull's; I hear you knew that person intimately, and desire you would at least send me some account of him. My worthy friend Dr. Stratford took his leave of me this morning, so that you will quickly see him at Oxford. My most humble service to all friends that honour me with their remembrance. I am with great sincerity,

“Reverend Sir,

“Your most faithfull humble servant,

“ROB. NELSON.”

“21st June, 1712.

“Pray for me to-morrow, because 'tis my birthday.”

The preceding letters to Mapletoft and Charlett will have exhibited Robert Nelson in the unreserve of private life, or amid the occupations of charity and religion. A different feature in his character, the interest, namely, which he took in the political combinations of the time, may be illustrated by an epistle of congratulation which he took occasion to address to Harley, upon the accession of his party to office. The ill-advised prosecution of Dr. Sacheverell by the Whigs had served to elicit the Tory sympathies of the country; the Queen felt herself encouraged to throw off the intolerable yoke under which she had been held by the imperious Dukes of Marlborough; Lord Godolphin and his friends were discarded from office, and the “Church Party,” as they were called, were installed in their room; Robert Harley, a relative of Mrs. Masham, the new favourite, taking the lead in the Tory administration as

Chancellor of the Exchequer, and Under Treasurer. Robert Nelson lost no time in congratulating the new minister, the very day after his appointment, in the following letter:—

* “SIR,—I beg leave to take this way of congratulating that justice which is at length done to your merit, and of expressing my satisfaction in the conquest you have gained over your enemies, who were earnestly bent upon your destruction; ‘their tongues imagined wickedness, and with lies they cut like a sharp razor.’ I cannot but think it happy for a nation, when persons in great stations encourage learning and the liberal sciences; and that has been always so much your character, that the rising generation will cheerfully apply themselves to their studies, now they know there are patrons that are disposed to distinguish their talents; and it will be a comfort to those that do not expect favours, securely to depend upon their having justice.

“I am, with great respect, Sir,

“Your most obedient and most humble servant,

“ROB. NELSON.”

“August 11, 1710.”

To political sympathies of a similar kind we owe probably, in part, an elaborate letter of compliment, which we find Nelson addressing to Matthew Prior, the poet and diplomatist. Prior had for some years abandoned his Whig connections, and was waiting to take service under Shrewsbury and Harley; the victory of Ramillies gave him an opportunity of exercising his poetical talents in an Ode of Congratulation to Queen Anne; and Nelson addressed to him an eulogistic epistle on the occasion, the sentiments of which modern criticism will scarcely be found to

* Nichols’ “Literary Anecdotes,” iv. 196.

endorse. Prior's poem is characterised by Johnson as tedious and inconsequential, and wearying both the ear and the understanding. "His imitations of Spenser," he complains, "which consist principally of *I ween* and *I weet*, without exclusion of later modes of speech, make his poem neither ancient nor modern. His mention of Mars and Bellona, and his comparison of Marlborough to the eagle that bears the thunder of Jupiter, are all puerile and unaffecting; and yet more despicable is the long tale told by Lewis, in his despair, of Brute and Troynovante, and the teeth of Cadmus, with his similes of the raven and eagle, and wolf and lion. By the help of such easy fictions and vulgar topics, without acquaintance with life, and without knowledge of art or nature, a poem of any length, cold and lifeless like this, may be easily written on any subject." With this judgment of our great critic it is amusing to contrast the lavish and unsuspicious praises of Nelson, all whose writings show him to have been utterly devoid of imaginative power, and who appears from this letter to Prior, to have been equally deficient in poetical discrimination.

* "DEAR SIR,—I have been so agreeably entertained in my retirement at this place with the beauties of your charming Muse, that mere sense of gratitude for the pleasure I have enjoyed constrains me to pay my acknowledgments to the masterly hand that administered it. And indeed, I must own, the banquet is so elegantly prepared, that at the same time that it raises my admiration, it gratifies and satisfies my appetite to the full; and yet I can return to it with fresh gusto: for *decies repetita placebit*.

"Our age is most certainly happy in this, that when our

* Nichols' "Literary Anecdotes," iv. 193, et seqq.

countrymen fight with so much bravery, we have a consummate poet that secures their hardy deeds from oblivion, and places their battles in eternal light. You observe a decency throughout your whole ode, which is the effect of your true good sense; that when with a liberal hand you bestow your incense upon our great General, it still rises in thicker clouds towards her who made his arms her choice. I could wish our pulpit orators understood the same decorum; and then all their particular praises would have had a relation to their main subject. Without the bias of friendship, I may venture to say you have improved those hints you have borrowed from Horace; and were I as well acquainted with Spenser,* I believe I should have reason to make the same judgment in reference to your style. I am sure, whatever his is, your imagination is warm, and your expressions noble and majestic: and yet they never carry you out of sight: but you are always pleased to be intelligible. I have but one query to make, which I doubt not but that you can resolve; which is, that though the Dane deserves the epithet cruel, which you bestow upon him; yet whether it was not necessary to have softened it, for the sake of that Prince† that is so nearly related to the subject of your poem. Pardon this criticism; for I am rather inclined to think it wrong, than to tax you with the least imperfection. It is possible you may think this whole letter very impertinent, because it comes from a person so little capable in judging of these matters, and in describing countries where he has never travelled. But my mind was full; and I found it necessary to give it vent. Besides, I thought it friendly to acquaint you how much I share in your glorious success, and that the short journey you have made to Parnassus turns so much to your solid reputation. I shall conclude this trouble when I have assured you that I have no ways designed to reproach you for not making me a present of your noble ode. I live in too much obscurity to be remembered by a person so thronged with

* Prior, in the Preface to this Ode, calls Horace and Spenser "his two great examples."

† Prince George of Denmark; husband of the Queen.

acquaintance of the best sort as you are; and yet I am willing to flatter myself with a share in your friendship; and, if I can give no other reason, I can always alledge that value and respect with which I am, dear Sir,

“ Your most faithful humble servant,

“ ROB. NELSON.

“ P.S. I had almost forgot to do justice to those admirable materials* you have provided for erecting a column to perpetuate the Queen's glory to future generations; and yet it struck me with particular pleasure, from that knowledge I have of those monuments that have been raised to the two Emperors you mention. It is a great misfortune that we have no eminent sculptor that can execute what you have so masterly designed. Such a work would make London exceed Rome in a monumental pillar, as much as it does already outdo her in trade and commerce. But we will glory that it stands fixt in your verses; where latest times may read Anna's immortal fame.

“ I desire to know whether the Queen has made you any present, to show her sense of your exquisite performance. I wish it for her sake, as well as yours.

“ Cranford, July 20, 1706.”

A much more congenial intimate of Robert Nelson's during the latter years of his life, was Ralph Thoresby, the well-known Yorkshire antiquary, whose occasional residence in London, when carrying his “*Topography of Leeds*” through the press, and whose connection with the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, as a corresponding

* In the six concluding stanzas. There was an intention to erect some national monument to the glory of the Queen and her hero, the Duke of Marlborough; and Claud David of Burgundy published a large sheet-print, from the model of a fountain, with the statues of Queen Anne, the Duke of Marlborough on horseback, and several river gods, designed to be erected at the Conduit in Cheapside.

member, brought him into occasional contact with many of the leading Churchmen of the day. Thoresby became acquainted with Nelson in 1708, and thus notices their first interview in a letter to his friend Richardson :—"I was with several of the deans, and other authors of the clergy and of the laity ; amongst whom I was particularly pleased with Mr. Nelson, who has printed prayers upon the Feasts and Fasts of the Church, and who, with Sir Isaac Newton, who is President of the Royal Society, obliged me with their names in my travelling album." (Feb. 23, 1708⁸). After this date, Thoresby's published Journal supplies repeated notices of his friend, and exhibits the intimacy of the footing on which they were used to meet. Thus :—

"1709. Jan. 28.—Walked to Dr. Hickes'. Afterwards visited his good neighbour, the pious and ingenious Robert Nelson, Esq., with whose excellent converse I was very well pleased ; he obliged me with four original letters from very eminent hands ; viz., Cardinal Norfolk, the Bishop of Meaux's, and Elector and Electrice Palatine ; and with his own two excellent treatises of the Feasts and Fasts of the Church, and of the Sacrament.

"1709. Dec. 26.—Concluded Dr. Hickes' ' Answer to the Popish Priest,' an excellent tract upon that subject, with an appendix of some very curious papers, as the Bishop of Meaux's letter and Bishop Bull's answer, a letter of the pious Mr. Nelson to a Priest, and a Saxon office. The excellent Mr. Nelson has presented me with the original letter of the said French Bishop.

"1712. June 19.—Visited the excellent Mr. Nelson, who presented me with his ' Feasts and Fasts ' translated into Welsh.

" July 24.—At the Meeting of the Royal Society, where met Mr. Nelson, and a message by him from the Lady Elizabeth Hastings as a subscriber.*

" August 7.—Walked to Bloomsbury, to enquire after the engraving by Mr. Virtue; then to take leave of the pious and excellent Mr. Nelson.

" August 22.—A most kind letter sent me from Whitehall, wherein good Mr. Newman acquainted me that, at the motion of the excellent Mr. Nelson (the pious author of the 'Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church' and other devout tracts), the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge had elected me a corresponding member of their Society, with a pleasing account of their success in ten years since their institution.

" Aug. 25.—Troubled to miss of the excellent Mr. Nelson and a clergyman (whether Dean Hicke or Dr. Bray, I know not), who came to visit me.

" 1714. May 13.—At the Meeting of the Royal Society, Sir Isaac Newton, the President, and . . . but I left all to go with Mr. Chamberlayne, to Bartlett's Buildings, to the other Society, viz., that for Promoting Christian Knowledge, which is to be preferred to all other learning. Dr. Pelling read the prayers before the consultation begun; then were read some pious and very moving letters from corresponding members, relating to Charity Schools and other pious designs in distant places, and an account of collections nearer hand. Resolutions for printing the Bible in Welsh, with a greater number of the New Testament and Prayer Books. I came away with my pious and honoured friend, Mr. Nelson.

" 1714. May 18.—To visit Mr. Nelson, and the learned

* *i. e.*, to Thoresby's book.

Dr. Hickes, who not being at liberty of half an hour, I had the benefit of the prayers in the adjoining church, and when his nonjuring conventicle was over, I visited the said Dean.

“ May 20.—We had at the annual feast of the Society for Propagating Christian Knowledge, the Bishop of Chichester (Dr. Manningham), the King of Prussia’s agent, Mr. Nelson, a most useful and excellent member, Sir Richard Hoare, and much good Company. I sat betwixt two friends, Justice Chamberlayne, and Mr. Shute the Treasurer, that made me very easy, though most of the company, from various parts of England and Wales, were strangers to me. It seemed to me like the primitive Agapæ, or Love Feasts, before corrupted.

“ June 29.—Perused the original subscription book of the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, to which several learned and pious divines and gentlemen contribute generously, Mr. Nelson 10*l.*, Mr. Doulines 5*l.* per annum.

“ July 1.—Was at the Royal Society, and after, at that for Promoting Christian Knowledge; had Mr. Nelson and Dr. Chamberlayne’s company at both.

“ July 17.—Walked to Queen Square, to take leave of the celebrated Mr. Nelson; where I also met with Mr. Spinckes, another noted author.

“ July 29.—With the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, at their new apartment at Lincoln’s Inn, (No. 6, in Searle’s Court). After the business was over, I looked at the curious and noble models of many churches proposed to be built; this pleasant room being that where the Commissioners meet upon that account in the forenoons (as the Bishop of London, Mr. Nelson, &c., did this day) and this Society in the afternoon.

“ Sept. 15.—At the Committee with Mr. Nelson, Mr.

Chamberlayne, and Mr. Lewis, a clergyman from the East Indies, where he had been a Missionary above twenty years; his modest account of the state of religion in those parts was very agreeable."

In Nelson's letters to Mapletoft and Charlett, mention is made of the Reverend Wm. Reeves, Rector of Cranford, and the well-known translator of the early Christian Apologists. In the preface to this work,* which was undertaken at the suggestion of Nelson, and was dedicated to him, we have a pleasing, but too highly colored, portrait

* "The Apologies of Justin Martyr, Tertullian and Minutius Felix, in defence of the Christian Religion, with the Commonitory of Vincentius Lirinensis, concerning the Primitive rule of Faith; translated from their originals with notes. Together with a Prefatory Discourse about the right use of the Fathers. By William Reeves, M.A. 1709."

A similar work, "The Apologeticks of the learned Athenian Philosopher Athenagoras; against the Sceptics and Infidels of that age. Done into English with notes by David Humphreys, B.A. London, 1714," was likewise dedicated "to Robert Nelson, Esq." "Since your having so frequently expressed a great esteem for the original was no small encouragement to me to undertake the task of giving it this English dress."

Humphreys was Nelson's personal friend, and had his warrant doubtless for the dedication. But the advantage of Nelson's name induced a less authorized use of it by the notorious Curll, which he lost no time in repudiating, by the following notice in the Spectator (Nov. 5, 1712), and Postboy (Nov. 6, 1712). "Advertisement.—Whereas there hath been lately published a certain legendary story of an unknown Theodosius, concerning the Priesthood of Christ, translated out of Suidas, under the title of 'A very ancient, authentic, and remarkable Testimony concerning our Blessed Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ;' which the Translator hath taken the liberty not only to dedicate to me, but to use my name in the title page, thereby giving occasion to think that I countenance the authority of that testimony. Now these are to certify, that the person who published that pamphlet is altogether a stranger to me, and that I was in no ways acquainted with his design till I saw it in print; for though the passage produced may appear remarkable, yet I cannot think the testimony either ancient or authentic.

"ROB. NELSON."

"Nov. 4, 1712."

A similar trick of trade seems to lie hid in the following title page, which would appear to claim Nelson's recommendation for the first as well as the second of the two letters specified:

"The Archbishop of Cambray's Pastoral Letter concerning the Love of

of his life and character from the pen of a contemporary admirer and friend.

“No man,” says he, “certainly has studied the ancients to better purpose than yourself: you have transcribed them in your soul: they are the glass you dress by; and a more beautiful figure, a fairer image of primitive Christianity, is hardly to be hoped for. You write and you live so exactly after these old saints, that I am really at a stand which to recommend most—the copy or the original; whether you and your works, or them and theirs. . . . You want, indeed (and blessed be God for it), the advantage of their fiery trials to illustrate one side of your virtue, to make your felicity more blazing. But whether the wind or the sun, temptations of the rougher or the softer kind, have the greater power, is not easy to determine; but history seems to say that good men have wrapt their religion faster about them in bad weather, and that prosperity has spoiled more Christians than affliction. To you, then, good Sir, I take the liberty of addressing these discourses, upon no other account but because I know you live the great things in them; and because love has a power of making slaves more effectually than interest, a captive of which quality I profess myself to be; and whoever shall live but half the time I have done under the enchantments of a conversation so wise and gracious, so instructive and beneficent, and every way so engaging, will find it hard, extremely hard, to be less your servant than I am.

“Give me leave likewise to remind you, Sir, who it was that proposed the undertaking, and encouraged it to the end. You gave me the confidence to believe, that by a work of this nature I might do some service to the Christian faith and the Christian morals, when some moderns were doing their best to reform us out of both. . . . I must tell you, Sir, that these were your own reasons for my entering upon these translations; and did they but come abroad in

God; together with the opinions of the Fathers on the same subject. Now done in English. To which is added a Circular Letter by George Bull, D.D., late Lord Bishop of St. David's; his Visitation Sermon and his Charge to his diocese. Published by Robert Nelson, Esq. 1715.”

that irresistible language they came to me from your own mouth, I should not question their good success upon others as well as myself; and the doing the least good to others, though out of season, I am sure would be the most agreeable obligation I could lay upon yourself. . . . Besides, Sir, I know full well what pain I must give you by an epistle of this kind, and what tasteless things the praises of men are especially, in this party-age, to one whose conversation is so much in heaven; he minds them no more than a traveller does what he hears upon the road, when he is post haste to take possession of a vast estate. And therefore, did I consult your pleasure only, I would say nothing of you even upon this tempting occasion, but be as industriously silent as you are of your own charities. But we, particularly we of the clergy, in justice to such uncommon virtue, in gratitude to so tender a friend and universal a benefactor, and in consideration of the public good, ought not in conscience to pass by an example of this kind, but with thankfulness to God propose it to the imitation of the world, who choose to live by example rather than by rule.

“There is a happiness of constitution, which I make bold, in Tertullian’s phrase, to call naturally Christian, and which, as I remember, you used to call ‘the grace of our mother’s bowels;’ and excepting those who are sanctified from the womb, few of the sons of men seem more sweetly composed and turned by nature for Christianity, and to enjoy a greater measure of complexional virtue, than yourself. The good seed of moral Christianity, and the fear of God, was early cast into the good ground, and has brought forth an hundred-fold. You set out for the kingdom of heaven in the morning of life; and, long before the meridian of it, was so far advanced in the way of truth, so firmly fixed upon the two Vincentian pillars, Scripture and primitive antiquity, that I find you disputing with doctors at an age when our gentry find something else to do with their thoughts than to lay them out upon religion. And for a proof of this, let any one but read your excellent ‘Letter to an English Priest of the Roman Communion at Rome,’ and he will see a combat in some respect not much unlike that between Goliath and David; an experienced

priest vanquished and argued down by one who was but a youth, 'and ruddy, and of a fair countenance;' and though neither the hardness of your argument, nor the softness of your tongue, could break his bones and bring him over in triumph to the Church of England, yet have they prevailed effectually on others; and a very late convert of yours from popery is an instance that arguments are like wedges, which go not well but when they are driven by a gentle hand. And such is the felicity of your temper, that you draw no blood in controversy; and where you cannot convince, you never gall.

"Having thus early secured your principles upon the Catholic foundation, your next care was to live, as well as believe, as the primitive Catholics did; to set your affections on things above and not on things on earth; to make God your hope, your joy, your life, your all; to love him with your whole heart and your neighbour as yourself; and by continual application to the Throne of Grace, and converse with the ancient martyrs and confessors, you have worked yourself up into that holy and habitual flame, as few burn with in so clear and constant a passion, either for God or man. The devotions you have blessed the world with best speak the abundance of your heart; for who can pray with that heavenly warmth and perfection but one who is always at prayer? Nor can you conceal your alms, notwithstanding all your pains not to let thy right hand know what thy left hand doth.

"Our misery is mostly of our own making. . . . Nay, one imperious passion, like the single thorn in the flesh, is enough to make a man uneasy in spite of all the enjoyments upon earth.

"Here, then, you began the war betimes, and turned all your philosophy and religion against these bosom-enemies, before they had gotten any strongholds in nature; and what a perfect conquest you have gained over yourself, is wondrous visible from that perpetual cheerfulness and serenity which shines about you under every condition of life. For the wisdom of the serpent and the innocence of the dove are so happily united, that where you cannot please, you never offend. And who is he that will harm you while you are

so prudent a follower of that which is good? Who is he that can find in his heart to harm you, while you are in pursuit only how to clothe the naked, to feed the hungry, to instruct the ignorant, and to be a father to the miserable of all parties? . . .

“The dogs and horses, the houses and gardens, with pools of water, with men-fingers and women-fingers, and other gratifications of flesh and blood, which the animal man so much dotes on, are strange insipid things to you, and rather your pity than your pleasure. The game you hunt after is to do good to the bodies and souls of men, to plant nurseries of religion, and to water them with your own instructions, to raise up a righteous seed for future generations, and to increase the kingdom of heaven. And none can think the pleasure of such a life but those who live it; for there is light and gladness sown for the righteous, which they reap at present from every virtuous action, and which increases with time, and improves upon enjoyment, and leaves no ungrateful relish behind it. Who would not choose to enjoy your present complacency and ravishing prospect, rather than to glitter awhile, and become the gaze and talk of the people; rather than to be sowing wind and reaping vanity, and, instead of doing justice and charity, to be treasuring up the cries of the oppressed against the day of wrath? But I must no longer follow my inclination; and therefore throw away my pen, as the painter in Plutarch did his pencil, in despair of finishing what I have but rudely begun. The bare relation of your life would be the greatest panegyric.”

With a theological writer of still greater eminence, the Rev. John Johnson, of Cranbrook, Nelson was brought into communication by the similarity of their views on the subject of the Holy Eucharist. Johnson had taught the doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice in his “Clergyman’s Vade Mecum,” published in 1709, and had pursued the subject in his “Propitiatory Oblation in the Holy Eucharist truly stated and defended from Scripture and Antiquity,

and the Communion Service of the Church of England," which appeared in 1710. In this little work he replied to the criticisms on his "Vade Mecum," which Bishop Trimnel of Norwich, had just addressed to his clergy in his published Charge, and he provoked rejoinders from Dr. Wile and several other minor controversialists in behalf of the bishop. Nelson read Johnson's book with unqualified satisfaction, and immediately addressed a letter of thanks and congratulation to the author, who was then personally unknown to him.*

"REVEREND SIR,—I have read with great pleasure your admirable treatise, entitled "The Propitiatory Oblation," &c., wherein I think you have placed the Christian sacrifice in a true light, and have secured it by Scripture and primitive antiquity from the vain attempts of those who have shewn a great inclination to confound that ancient truth. You have animated your whole performance with so much judicious spirit, as well as learning, that an impartial reader can be neither tired nor offended; the chastisements of your adversary fall in so naturally, and are so well deserved by him, that it may be reasonably expected that they should rather correct than provoke him; at least, it is the effect I wish they may have upon him. I must freely own, that your explanation of the word offertory was entirely new to me, and that you have convinced me that our liturgy uses it according to your sense of it.† You may judge therefore whether I do not owe you a great many thanks for the fresh light I have received upon this subject, and for that satisfaction you have given me by your handling of it. I could not satisfy myself without taking the first opportunity

* Taken from the "Life of the late Rev. John Johnson, Vicar of Cranbrook, by the late Rev. Thos. Brett, L.L.D. Together with three of Mr. Johnson's Posthumous Tracts, and an Appendix, containing some Letters written to him by the late Rev. Geo. Hickes, D.D., and by Robert Nelson, Esq. 1748."

† In the Postscript to the Propitiatory Oblation, Johnson had given sufficient proof even from our reformed liturgies, that "offertory" denotes the *sentences* sung or said, while the alms and devotions of the people are collected.

of making you my acknowledgments for the great service you have done to the Christian Sacrifice, assuring you, that if ever you should think me capable of testifying my gratitude by any other substantial instance of my respect, you may always freely command me. You must prepare yourself to meet with great opposition in an age which distinguishes itself by a great contempt of ecclesiastical antiquity, and that among those who ought to rejoice in it as their great comfort and support; but you seem so well furnished with the solid virtues of the Christian life, that I am persuaded you will always receive the attacks and contradictions of your enemies in the spirit of meekness, and treat them with the respect that is due to their characters. I hope you will pardon this address from one that is a stranger to your person, when he assures you, that your admirable talents are greatly valued by,

“ Reverend Sir,

“ Your faithful humble servant,

“ ROB. NELSON.”

“ Gloucester Street, near the Chapel,

“ London, Feb. 18, 1702^g.

“ To the Reverend Mr. Johnson,
Rector of Cranbrook, Kent.”

Encouraged by such expressions of sympathy, Johnson proceeded to unfold and support his views in a larger work, the contents of which will be sufficiently indicated by its title: “ The Unbloody Sacrifice and Altar unveiled and supported, in which the nature of the Eucharist is explained according to the sentiments of the Christian Church in the four first centuries; proving that the Eucharist is a proper material sacrifice, that it is both eucharistic and propitiatory, that it is to be offered by proper officers, that the oblation is to be made on a proper altar, that it is properly consumed by manducation. To which is added a proof that what our Saviour speaks concerning eating His flesh and drinking His blood,

in the sixth chapter of St. John's Gospel, is principally meant of the Eucharist." In this elaborate work Johnson puts himself forward as the exponent and champion of the Eucharistic sacrifice against its assailants, only, he says, because its more eminent advocates were then incapable of engaging in its defence. "The most primitively learned Bishop Bull," he writes,* "was some years ago gathered to his fathers, whose doctrine he had so nobly followed and defended. Dr. Grabe soon followed him. Dr. Hickes, though yet alive, is worn out in the service of primitive Christianity and the study of antiquities, incapable of turning over books, and of the fatigue of writing or dictating anything that requires long application, and every day expecting his dissolution. Mr. Nelson was engaged in writing the 'Life of Bishop Bull' and publishing his works, and wholly employed since in works whereby he will merit of the present and of future generations. And since I could hear of no person that was willing to undertake an affair of this nature, I at last came to a resolution of doing it myself, though I was sensible how inferior I am in all respects to the least of those eminent servants of God whom I have now mentioned." During the preparation of this work Johnson was in constant communication with Hickes and Nelson, who modified their opinions on the subject in conformity with his. Hickes had taught an oblation of bread and wine before consecration, as material for the ensuing sacrament; but Johnson pushed the doctrine of the Eucharistic sacrifice further than this, and insisted that the ancients only practised an oblation of the elements after consecration, as representative of Christ's Body and Blood. Nelson at first attempted to persuade Johnson to defer to the opinion of Hickes, but eventually joined Hickes in acquiescing in the authorities which Johnson alleged. The latter alludes to the amicable discussion in a

* Vol. i. p. 29. edit. 1847.

preface to a subsequent edition of his "Vade Mecum," and concludes—"For the evidence of the truth of the matter of fact as here represented, I have Dr. Hickes' letters to shew, and I think Mr. Nelson's too." The two following letters will exhibit Nelson's interest in his work.

"REVEREND SIR,—I am sorry to acquaint you that my worthy neighbour Dean Hickes lies at present in a very languishing condition, by reason of a very painful fit of the strangury, which makes it very doubtful what event his illness may have. He was not able to read your letter of the 21st, but sent it to me to answer in what terms I should think fit. I am sure you will be concerned, upon many accounts, for the melancholy reply I am forced to make you, whereby particularly you will be deprived of the assistance of his masterly judgment; though I am of the opinion, that few of our divines want it less than you do upon the argument you are engaged in. Notwithstanding the pains of his body are great, yet his mind is perfectly at ease, and entirely resigned to the will of God; do not fail to remember him in your prayers. I was glad to hear my bookseller had been so careful as to convey to you Bishop Bull's Life, which I am sure you will read with grains of allowance; pray God enable you to finish the noble work you have begun, and that thereby primitive truth may prevail, and flourish among us. I recommend myself to your prayers, and am with great respect,

" Reverend Sir,

" Your most faithful humble servant,

" ROB. NELSON."

" March 24, 1712.

" To the Reverend Mr. Johnson,
At Cranbrook, in Kent."

" REVEREND SIR,—You judged very right, in supposing that the Dean's illness prevented your receiving his cor-

rections ; I had an opportunity to speak to him this day upon the subject of your letter, he desired me to acquaint you, that the observations he had made were very few, and of no great importance, and that you have no reason to be concerned that he is disabled from sending them ; and farther assures you, that the care of printing your papers is in very good hands, and hopes you will go on with all imaginable chearfulness ; he thanks God for that noble parrasia wherewith you are endowed in a subject of such importance. . . . I must own, I expect the finishing of your treatise with a vast deal of pleasure, because it will be a perfect discourse upon the subject. I am sorry to tell you, that I am lately troubled with a pain and heat in my eyes, which I am afraid I have used too freely, but I mention it to excuse any farther enlarging from,

“ Reverend Sir,

“ Your most faithful humble servant,

“ ROB. NELSON.”

“ July 7, 1713.

“ To the Reverend Mr. John Johnson,
Rector of Cranbrook, Kent.”

The “Unbloody Sacrifice,” after long delay, at last appeared in 1714, the author not forgetting, both in the prefatory epistle to the Bishop of Norwich, and in the animadversions on Dr. Wise, appended at its close, to rebut the attacks which had been made on his revered friend Robert Nelson. “Bishop Taylor,” he urges, in one place,* “did the same thing which Dr. Hancock charges as a fault on Mr. Nelson ; that is, he brought the notion of a sacrifice into a book of devotion, I mean, his ‘Holy Living and Dying.’” And he exclaims at Dr. Wise for striking at “him, whom one may justly style a friend to all good men, and the truest fautor and benefactor to true Christianity and

* Vol. i. p. 14.

the clergy of any private gentleman in the whole kingdom; whose writings and actions are the fairest transcript of primitive piety that is, I believe, any where to be found in the Christian world; I need not tell my reader Mr. Nelson is the man. I should value myself, if it were in my power to say or do anything in his defence upon a just occasion; but what Dr. W. objects of his citing the Rabbins, needs no defence."* Nelson acknowledged the sympathy of Johnson, and the merits of his work in the following letter, written, it will be observed, in the last year of his life.

"REVEREND SIR,—If I have not thanked you sooner for your valuable present of the *Unbloody Sacrifice*, &c., it is because I had a notion of your attending the Convocation, and thereby expected an opportunity of doing it in person; for surely I could not be backward to express my great esteem of an author, whose performance has struck out fresh light upon an important doctrine of primitive Christianity, and whose great indulgence towards me has placed me in company, that I no ways deserve to appear in. How far persons may be affected, who have formed long ago opposite notions to those you have laid down concerning the holy mysteries, we may easily determine; but surely they must be very inexcusable, if they have still assurance enough to charge Popery upon the maintainers of this doctrine, after what you have said to take off the force and venom of that objection. Some of our Bishops are so prejudiced, that they will not read what you have with so much judgment offered, upon a supposition that they are masters of the thing, and of what antiquity has taught as to that point; but their conclusions convince me that they deceive themselves, and are not likely to grow wiser if they continue to shut out the light. The believers of the Eucharistical Sacrifice are beholden to you for the enlargement of their foundation, for the growing strength of their evidence, and for weak-

* Vol. ii. p. 362, 3.

ening with such success the batteries of their adversaries ; and I question not, but that the rising generation of divines, whose minds have not been infected with modern notions, will entertain such truths as you teach, not with less pleasure than satisfaction. Thus, Sir, the present age are very much obliged to you for such a masterly performance, which posterity will admire, without being able to add any improvements upon a subject, which you seem to have finished as far as you have carried it, and have left us with a strong appetite for what you have given us reason to expect. It is a shame that you should not be distinguished by those in power, as much as you have distinguished yourself by your admirable learning and solid judgment, with a clearness and spirit in your style, which is seldom found in such controversies. I should be extremely pleased to have it in my power to do you any considerable service, and you may depend upon my readiness and zeal, whenever you will put them to the trial, being with great respect and affection,

“ Reverend Sir,

“ Your most faithful humble servant,

“ ROB. NELSON.”

“ April 3, 1714.

“ To the Reverend Mr. John Johnson,
Rector of Cranbrook, Kent.”

CHAPTER VII.

NELSON'S CLOSING YEARS.

Nelson's friendship with Bull.—Correspondence with Bossuet.—Bull's corruptions of the Romish Church.—Nelson's endeavours for the assistance of Bowyer.—Letter to Wanley.—Nelson's portrait of a Country Parson in his *Life of Bull*.—He criticises Samuel Clarke.—Clarke's '*Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*.'—Nelson edits Knight's reply.—Nelson's declining health.—Leaves town for Kensington.—Entrusts Lee with his '*Address to Persons of Quality*.'—Writes a Preface to the '*Christian Exercise*.'—Lee's letter of consolation in his sickness.—A few particulars of his last days.—His burial.—His character from Dr. Marshall's *Funeral Discourse*.

OF the long and intimate acquaintance that existed between Robert Nelson and Bishop Bull, but few memorials have come down to us. For the preservation of the following letter we are indebted to Thoresby, who obtained it from Nelson as an autograph of the bishop.

"WORTHY SIR,—I was much troubled when lately I understood from my sister Gregory, from Mr. Hanger's family, that you never received any answer to your obliging letter, which about a year ago, with two pamphlets you sent me. I do assure you that as soon as I could have leisure cursorily to peruse those pamphlets, I wrote a brief answer to your letter and them, and delivered it to the post with my own hand. I directed my letter to be left for you with Madam Nelson, at her house in Throgmorton Street, behind the Old Exchange.

"Of this I thought good to inform you, that you may not think me guilty of so much ill-nature and ill-breeding too, as to slight so worthy a person and friend as you are, than whom I scarce know any one in the world of whom I

have a greater respect, and (if you will admit of that friendly word) love for.

"I have sent you, together with this, a Latin treatise of mine, which I have lately published, and which I entreat you to accept of. I do not yet know how to direct a letter that it may speedily and certainly come to your hands. If you will give me directions by a line or two, I shall very gladly, if you please, maintain a frequent intercourse of letters with you. I have been some ~~few~~ days in London, and if my occasions would have permitted, and I could have found you out, I should have been ambitious of pressing your hand. Indeed, I truly long for an opportunity of seeing your face, and will not despair of meeting you some time or other at Avening, in Gloucestershire, where no man living should be more welcome to,

"Sir, your very affectionate and

"Faithful friend and humble servant,

"GEO. BULL.

"If you please at any time to write to me, direct your letter thus:—For Dr. Bull, at Avening, near Tedbury, in Gloucestershire."

"Holborn,
"London, Aug. 6, '94."

The Latin Treatise mentioned in the foregoing letter was Bull's "*Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ*," which had just been printed at Oxford, and in which he had collected the testimonies of the primitive Fathers of the first three centuries, in proof of the divinity of our Lord, as a necessary article of faith. In addition to its intrinsic value, this work possesses a peculiar interest from its having formed the occasion of Bossuet's well-known challenge to the author, and of Bull's reply in his "*Corruptions of the Church of Rome*." Nelson, who had received many attentions from Bossuet when in France, and who still continued on terms

of correspondence with him, took occasion a few years later (July 18, 1699) to send a copy of the "*Judicium*" to the celebrated Bishop of Meaux, who already in his "*Variations of the Protestant Churches*," and in his defence of that work against Jurieu, had appealed in the highest terms of eulogium to Bull's previous work on the Nicene Creed. Bossuet appears not to have acknowledged the receipt of Nelson's letter till the following year. He was then busily engaged* in assisting at the deliberations of an assembly of the Gallican Church, which met at St. Germain's, on 2nd June, 1700, and which (under his guidance) condemned both the Jansenist doctrines of grace, and the relaxed principles of morals which were involved in the Jesuit doctrine of probability. He was at the same time brought into frequent communication with the English court of St. Germain's, being called upon to preach before the exiled king; who told him that he always intended, had he continued on the throne, to invite him to London for conference with the most eminent Anglican divines. Bossuet replied to the king that he would willingly have crossed the sea upon such a mission; and he would often recur with natural regret to the loss of such a field for the display of his controversial powers, saying, "*qu'il se seroit flatté de gagner bien des choses sur les Anglais, à cause du respect qu'ils avaient pour la sainte antiquité.*" It was under the impulse of such a feeling that we may suppose the great controversialist to have thrown out his challenge to the Anglican divine, in the letter of compliment which he now addressed to him through their common friend. He had read Bull's work himself, and had offered it to the perusal of several other prelates who were then at St. Germain's; he had mentioned it seemingly in the assembly then sitting, and had received authority to join their congratulations to the author with his own, upon

* Bauffet, "*Histoire de Bossuet*," vol. ii. pp. 329, 354.

the service he had done the whole Catholic Church in so well defending her determination of the necessity of believing the divinity of the Son of God.

“ J’ay receu, Monsieur, depuis quinze jours une lettre, dont vous m’honorez de Blackheath auprès de Londres, le 18 Juillet de l’année passée, en m’envoyant un livre du Docteur Bullus, intitulé, ‘Judicium Ecclesiæ Catholicæ,’ &c. Je vous dirai d’abord, Monsieur, que je ressentis beaucoup de joie à la veue de vostre écriture et de vostre nom, et que je fus ravi de cette marque de vostre souvenir. Quant à l’ouvrage du Docteur Bullus, j’ay voulu le lire entier, avant que de vous en accuser la reception ; afin de vous en dire mon sentiment. Il est admirable, et la matière qu’il traite ne pouvoit estre expliquée plus sçavamment et plus à fond. C’est ce que je vous supplie de vouloir bien luy faire sçavoir, et en mesme temps les sincères congratulations de tout le clergé de France assemblé en cette ville, pour le service qu’il rend à l’Eglise Catholique, en défendant si bien le jugement qu’elle a porté sur la nécessité de croire la divinité du Fils de Dieu.

Qu’il me soit permis de luy dire qu’il me reste un seul sujet d’étonnement. C’est qu’un si grand homme qui parle si bien de l’Eglise, du salut que l’on ne trouve qu’en son unité, et de l’assistance infallible du St. Esprit dans le Concile de Nicée, ce qui induit la mesme grace pour tous les autres assemblés dans la mesme Eglise, puisse demeurer un seul moment sans la reconnoistre. Ou bien, Monsieur, qu’il daigne me dire comme à un zélé défenseur de la doctrine qu’il enseigne, ce que c’est donc qu’il entend par ce mot *Eglise Catholique* ? Est-ce l’Eglise *Romaine*, et celles qui luy adherent ? Est-ce l’Eglise *Anglicane* ? Est-ce un amas confus de sociétés séparées les unes des autres ? Et comment peuvent elles estre ce Royaume de J. C. non divisé en luy-mesme, et qui aussi ne doit jamais périr ? Que je ferai consolé d’avoir sur ce sujet un mot de responce, qui m’explique le sentiment d’un si grave auteur.

Je suis très aise, Monsieur, d’apprendre dans vostre lettre l’heureuse nouvelle de la santé de Madame vostre femme, que je recommande de bon cœur à Dieu, avec vous et

vostre famille. Ceux qui vous ont raconté les rares talens de M. l'Archevesque de Paris, aujourd'hui le Cardinal de Noailles, vous ont dit la vérité; il y a long temps que la chaire de St. Denis n'a esté si dignement remplie. Si M. Collier, dont vous me parlez, a fait quelque écrit Latin sur la nouvelle spiritualité,* vous m'obligerez de me l'envoyer. Mais sur tout n'oubliez jamais que je suis avec beaucoup de sincérité,

“ Monsieur,

“ Votre très-humble, et très-obéissant serviteur,

“ ✠ J. BÉNIGNE, E. de Meaux.

“ A Monsieur Monsieur Nelson, à Blackheath.

“ P.S.—En m'écrivant à Paris, Place des Victoires, vos lettres me seront portées partout où je pourais estre.” †

“ A St. Germain en Laye, 24 Juil. 1700.”

The unusual compliment, and the personal challenge made more stir in theological circles in England than it had probably done at St. Germain's. Burnet thought the circumstance remarkable enough for special mention in the “History of his own Time,” and speaks of Bull's “Judicium” as the “learnedest treatise that this age has produced of the doctrines of the Primitive Church concerning the Trinity,” and as “so well received all Europe over, that in an assembly general of the clergy of France, the Bishop of Meaux was desired to write over to a correspondent he had in London, that they had such a sense of the service he had done their common faith, that upon it they sent him their particular thanks. I read the letter, and so can deliver it for a certain truth, how uncommon soever it may

* A reference, apparently, to the mysticism of his antagonist, Fenelon.

† Endorsed in Nelson's handwriting, “To Robert Nelson, Esq.—Bishop of Meaux, 24th July, 1700. Answered ✠, Oct., 1701.” This celebrated letter of Bossuet to Nelson, written in the round and large but unsteady hand of age, is now in the British Museum. Birch MSS. 4277. 38.

seem to be." * Being thus handed about in private circles, an imperfect abstract of Bossuet's letter got printed in a newspaper of the day,† and the public impatiently waited for Bull's reply, which his failing health probably delayed. The earliest rejoinder was consequently made by the Rev. Ed. Stephens,‡ formerly Bull's near neighbour and friend, when a country squire in Gloucestershire, but at this time a nonjuring clergyman in the vicinity of London, and an indefatigable theological pamphleteer. The celebrated Charles Leslie drew up another reply in his "True Notion of the Catholic Church." Bishop Bull's elaborate answer was not completed till 1704, when it was sent in MS. to Nelson, just about the time that he received the news of Bossuet's death. Nelson had still continued to correspond with his distinguished friend, and a letter is extant, dated "Feb. 23, 1703.—Dans la Rue d'Ormond, à Londres," and commencing—

"MONSEIGNEUR,—Vous voulez bien que, pour profiter de l'occasion qui se presente du Rev. Père Fontanée, je prenne la liberté de vous écrire, et pour vous assurer de mes très humble respects, et de vous prier en même temps de me conserver toujours quelque place dans l'honneur de votre amitié."

Père Fontanée, he proceeds to say, will give an account of his reception in England, which appears to have been such as was due to his merit, but "vous savez bien que nous n'avons pas trop de respect pour les Pères de la Société." § He begs Bossuet's acceptance of a copy of Bull's Latin works just edited, in a collected form, by Grabe. And he concludes—

* Burnet's "History of his own Time," vol. v. p. 115. edit. 1823.

† "The Postboy," No. 1280.

‡ "The wonder of the Bishop of Meaux upon the perusal of Dr. Bull's Book considered and answered." Anon. n. d. (1703 ?). See Hearne's "Reliquiæ," pp. 59—64 for an account of Stephens and a list of his writings, in which, however, the above tract is omitted.

§ i. e. The Jesuit Society.

“Entre les autres malheurs de la guerre, it faut conter la perte que nous faisons des beaux livres, qui sont publiés dans les autres pais; may, pleut à Dieu, que nous ne pouvions pas nous plaindre des choses de plus grande consequence, la libertinage s'introduit par tout, *inter arma silent leges*. Vous m'obligerez beaucoup de me faire scavoir si Monsieur l'Archevêque de Cambrai a publié son *Télémaque* après sa disgrâce ou devant; cette circonstance se fera juger differemment de cet ouvrage là. Je suis avec un profond respect,

“ Monseigneur,

“ Votre très-humble, &c.,

“ DE NELSON.”

Bossuet died in the following year, and Bull's reply to his challenge remained consequently in Nelson's hands till 1705, when it was published by Dr. Hickes in his first volume of “Controversial Letters,” in company with Leslie's “Reply to the same queries of the Bishop of Meaux,” and Nelson's “Letter to a Priest of the English Communion at Rome.” In this celebrated tract, Bull retorts with spirit upon the wonder Bossuet professed:—

“I cannot but very much wonder at it, especially at the reasons on which it is grounded. He wonders how I, that speak so advantageously of the Church, &c., can continue a moment without acknowledging her. Her! what her doth the bishop mean? Doubtless the present Church of Rome, in the communion whereof he himself lives, and to which his design seems to be to invite me. But where do I speak so advantageously of the present Church of Rome? Nowhere, I am sure. Of the Catholic Church of the three first centuries I do, indeed, speak with great deference. To her judgment, next to the Holy Scriptures, I appeal against the oppugners of our Lord's divinity. The rule of faith, the symbols or creeds, the profession of which was then made the condition of communion with the Catholic Church, I heartily and firmly

believe. This primitive Catholic Church, as to her government and discipline, her doctrines of faith, and her worship of God, I think ought to be the standard by which we are to judge of the orthodoxy and purity of all other succeeding Churches. According to this rule, the Church of England will be found the best and purest Church at this day in the Christian world. Upon which account I bless God that I was born, baptized and bred up in her communion, wherein I firmly resolve by His grace to persist, *usque ad extremum vitæ spiritum*. But the present Church of Rome hath far departed from this primitive pattern.

“ Monsieur de Meaux adds, as a farther reason of his wonder, that I speak of salvation as only to be found in unity with her. Her! Doth the Bishop here again mean the present Church of Rome? If he doth, I must plainly tell him, that I am so far from ever thinking that salvation is only to be found in unity with her, that on the contrary, I verily believe, they are in great danger of their salvation who live in her communion, that is, who own her erroneous doctrines, and join in her corrupt worship. I do, indeed, in the book, which the Bishop hath an eye unto, show that there was a canon or rule of faith received in the primitive Church, which whosoever persisted to oppose was cast out of the communion of the Church, and so out of the ordinary way of salvation. But what is this to the present Church of Rome and her communion?

“ The bishop’s last reason is, that I own the infallible assistance of the Holy Ghost in the Council of Nice, which infers the same assistance for all others assembled in the same church. To which I answer, I mention this indeed as the opinion of Socrates, but at the same time I give another account of the credit that is to be given to the Nicene Council in the article of our Saviour’s divinity; viz. that it is incredible that so many holy and approved men, assembled from all parts of the Christian world, should be ignorant of the first and fundamental doctrine of the Holy Trinity, or of what themselves had received from their predecessors concerning it, or should wickedly conspire among themselves to new model the faith received in the Church, concerning this principal article of Christianity.

“But supposing I were fully of Socrates’ opinion concerning the infallible assistance of the Holy Ghost attending every truly general council in matters of faith, I should be never the nearer to the communion of the Church of Rome as it is now subjected to the decrees of Trent. For the assembly at Trent is to be called by any other name, rather than that of a general council.

“I proceed to the bishop’s questions. He asks me what I mean by the Catholic Church? I answer, by the Catholic Church I mean the Church universal, being a collection of all the Churches throughout the world, who retain the faith once delivered to the saints, that is, who hold and profess in the substance of it that faith and religion which was delivered by the Apostles of Christ to the first original Churches; which faith and religion is contained in the Holy Scriptures, especially of the New Testament, and the main fundamentals of it comprised in the canon or rule of faith universally received throughout the primitive churches. All the churches at this day which hold and profess this faith and religion, however distant in place or distinguished by different rites and ceremonies, yea, or divided in some extra-fundamental points of doctrine, yet agreeing in the essentials of the Christian religion, make up together one Christian Catholic Church under the Lord Christ, the supreme head thereof.

“This Catholic Church, I believe shall never fail; that is, Christianity shall never utterly perish from the face of the earth, but there shall be some to maintain and uphold it to the end of the world. But I know of no promise of indefectability from the faith made to any particular Church, no, not to the Church of Rome itself. And if we may judge by the Holy Scriptures and by the doctrine and practice of the primitive Catholic Church, the present Church of Rome hath already lamentably failed, and fallen into many dangerous and gross errors. She hath quite altered the primitive ecclesiastical government, changed the primitive canon or rule of faith, and miserably corrupted the primitive liturgy or form of divine worship.”*

* Abridged from the original.

Bull was at this time seventy years of age, and did not sustain more than three or four years the burden of the episcopal office, which was now laid upon him. Upon his decease (Feb. 17, 1709) Nelson was requested by his son to undertake a memoir of the life and writings of his venerable friend; and the preparation of this biography occupied his time for the three following years. He put the last stroke to his work on Dec. 31, 1712; but its publication was a little longer delayed by a disastrous fire at his friend Bowyer's,* by which a few sheets of it were destroyed, and among them unfortunately some critical observations of Dr. Hickes, which his illness did not permit him to rewrite.

By this conflagration Bowyer's printing-house in Dogwell Court, Whitefriars, was entirely consumed, and his loss amounted to upwards of 4000*l*. His misfortune excited a general sympathy; the booksellers and printers raised a subscription in his behalf, a royal brief (according to the fashion of the day) was obtained in his favour, which brought him nearly 1400*l*., and his private friends exerted themselves warmly in his cause. Among them, writes Nichols,† Bowyer's apprentice, son-in-law, and successor, "the good, the pious Mr. Nelson found here an ample field for the exercise of his munificence and friendship. He had a peculiar regard for Mr. Bowyer, who had regularly

* "Evening Post," Feb. 13, 1712, 13—

"Whereas by the violence of a sudden fire on Friday the 29th day of January last, the printing-office of Mr. W. Bowyer in White Friars, was burned to the ground, this is to acquaint the world, that part of the impression of Bishop Bull's 'Important Points of Primitive Christianity maintained and defended in several sermons, and other discourses, to which is prefixed the history of his life by Robert Nelson, Esq.,' was consumed in the flames. By which misfortune we are obliged to defer the publication of Bishop Bull's Important Points till the last sheets are reprinted, which we hope will be in a fortnight's time. London, printed for Richard Smith, at the sign of Bishop Beveridge's Head, in Paternoster Row near Cheap-side; and in the fore walk of Exeter Change, in the Strand."

† "Anecdotes of Bowyer," p. 3.

ushered his valuable productions into the world, and in the period of his distress not only gave largely himself, but exerted his endeavours successfully in soliciting the affluent and great, among those it would be unpardonable not to mention the Earl of Thanet, Lord Viscount Weymouth, and Lord Guildford." The Lord Chief Justice Parker was another person of distinction whom Nelson interested in his friend's misfortune, as appears from the following letter to Wanley :—

"MR. WANLEY,—Pray do me the favour to write out the Saxon characters for Mr. Bowyer*, as you have kindly promised; despatch in this affair is of great consequence, because my Lord Chief-Justice Parker does intend to assist towards repairing his misfortunes by giving him a set of those letters, and is very uneasy he is not ready to print his friend's book, which requires those characters to perfect it. You will oblige me much by your kindness to Mr. Bowyer, and I shall be ready to make you any acknowledgment. I have been confined near a month by the gout, but am now upon recovering.

"I am, Sir,

"Your affectionate servant,

"ROBERT NELSON."

"May 19, 1713."

Before the preceding date, Bowyer had been able to complete Nelson's "Life of Bull" with the Sermons and Discourses to which it was prefixed, which made their appearance in 4 vols. 8vo. before the end of 1712.† In this

* "I did what is required underneath," wrote Wanley at the top of Nelson's letter, "in the most able and exact manner that I could in all respects. But it signified little, for when the alphabet came into the hands of the workman, who was but a blunderer, he could not imitate the fine and regular stroke of the pen; so that the letters were not only clumsy but unlike those I drew. This appears by Mrs. Elstob's Saxon Grammar being the book mentioned by Mr. Nelson."

† "Some Important Points of Christianity maintained and defended in several Sermons and Discourses, by Geo. Bull, D.D., late Lord Bishop of St. David's."

biographical sketch we have Nelson's Portrait of a Country Parson ; the standard of duty which it supplies, not rising above a level which is attainable by most clergymen, and the circumstances of Bull's ministry being precisely such as surround the rural pastor at the present day. Bull is described as preaching twice every Sunday to his little flock ; his discourses being familiar expositions of Holy Scripture, from notes that he previously prepared, spoken with a becoming fervour and decency of gesture, and with some vehemency of voice, whereby he kept his audience awake and raised their attention to what he delivered. He had to persuade a set of prejudiced parishioners to bring their children to public baptism, which they had not been used to do for many years before, and to return thanks to God after childbirth, which had been discontinued for some time in that parish. He not only heard the youth repeat the words of our excellent catechism, but expounded to them the meaning of it, in a plain and familiar manner, and had such good success in his instructions as to carry fifty persons at a time to be confirmed at Cirencester. He gave notice duly of all the Holy-days of the Church, and took his household with him on those days to the public service. He took great pains to persuade his parishioners to a better observance of Good Friday, and always preached the sermon himself on that day to bring them together. At Evening he had a service in his church every Thursday, and in his cure at Bristol, he would pitch upon some week-day before he administered the Holy Eucharist, to instruct the younger sort in the nature and design of the Christian sacrifice. He did not content himself with these public ministrations, or with going to the sick, when their condition required spiritual

To which is prefixed the history of his life and of those controversies in which he was engaged. By Robert Nelson, Esq. 1713."

assistance ; but he used to visit all his parishioners, rich and poor, without distinction at their own houses, in a certain compass of time, not to trifle away an hour in empty talk, but to be serviceable to them as their exigencies required, in the salvation of their souls. And when in the course of such visits, he came upon separatists from the Church, his constant practice was to inquire the name of the parties who had seduced them, and to challenge them to a conference on the subject in debate ; and he had thereby great success in recovering his wandering sheep.

To this portrait of his ancient friend in the capacity of a rural parish priest, Nelson added a synopsis of his different Theological Works, such as to argue no superficial acquaintance with the controversies in which Bull had been engaged.* In giving an account of his Exposition of the doctrine of the Holy Trinity in his “*Defensio Fidei Nicænæ*,” he took occasion to complain of the artful and unfair use which had been made of Bull’s citations by Dr. Samuel Clarke, in his “*Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity*,” and of his attempts to wrest them in favour of the Arian scheme. In this notorious work † Clarke had ventured to affirm, that the word “*God*” in Scripture never signifies a complex notion of three Persons in one Godhead ; that it merely means the person of the

* Nelson had previously been engaged in friendly controversy with Whiston, on his Arian heterodoxies. Whiston, it seems, when expelled from Cambridge in 1710, withdrew voluntarily from the S.P.C.K., sending such a letter upon the occasion, (he says) “as Mr. Nelson, one of the best of all our members, as I have been told, greatly approved of.” Nelson had endeavoured to reclaim him by a letter, to which Whiston replied with characteristic self-confidence. “I heartily thank you for your good wishes and prayers for me, as supposing me running into a dangerous heresy, and nothing can be more charitable or Christian than what you do upon that supposition ; but, &c.”—*Memoirs of Whiston*, pp. 174. seqq. 1749.

† “The Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity. In Three Parts. Wherein all the texts in the New Testament relating to that Doctrine and the principal passages in the Liturgy of the Church of England, are collected, compared, and explained. By Samuel Clarke, D.D. 1712.”

Father and sometimes the person of the Son ; that the Holy Ghost is never called God in Scripture ; that the reason why the Son is called God, is not so much on account of his essential Divinity, as of his relative authority over us ; that when Scripture speaks of One God, it does not predict unity of substance, but merely coincidence of will and power between the Father and the Son ; that absolute supreme honor is due to the person of the Father only, and that to Him only should our prayers and praises be primarily or ultimately directed. These heterodox sentiments upon the mystery of the Holy Trinity, Clarke attempted in this work to establish from Holy Scripture and to reconcile with the formularies of our Church. Of their actual irreconcilability with the devotions of our Prayer-book, he himself supplied a notable proof,* by omitting the celebration of the Holy Communion on Trinity Sunday, in order to avoid using the proper preface for the day and pronouncing the emphatic assertion of the orthodox doctrine which it contains. The avowal of such principles by one holding the important cure of St. James's, Westminster, excited a general indignation and alarm. His book received a variety of replies ; from Dr. Edwards, the veteran champion of Calvinistic Orthodoxy, on whatever side it was assailed, from Dr. Wells of Cotesbach, Nelson's correspondent and admirer, from Dr. Gastrell, his friend Mapletoft's son-in-law, from Mr. James Knight, afterwards Vicar of St. Sepulchre's, and from Robert Nelson himself, who took a leading and a respected part in the controversy which ensued.

Clarke had endeavoured to fortify his doctrine of the essential inferiority of the Son to the Father, by Bull's

* " Historical Memoirs of the Life of Dr. Samuel Clarke. By W. Whiston. 1730." p. 67.

assertion of His subordinate relation, and Nelson felt himself called upon in his "Life of Bull" to vindicate the bishop's memory, and to expose the unfairness of Clarke's citations. "Almost all of them," he says, "are represented in a very different view from that which our author certainly had in writing those passages; as are also the citations out of the Fathers themselves, which Dr. Clarke here met with, and hath accommodated to his own purpose, without so much as the least notice taken of the explications and answers given to them by this our author." * Next year (Nov. 16, 1713), Nelson resumed the controversy by a letter to Dr. Clarke, which he prefixed to an anonymous Vindication of the Doctrine of the Holy Trinity, † written by Knight. In this letter, he protests against the non-natural sense by which the Arian divine sought to explain away the formularies of the Church. "If the Judges, and others learned in the law shall follow the same method of interpreting the laws of the land, as you have taken in interpreting and accommodating the sense of the Church in her most authentic forms and declarations before God and man, and of the venerable Fathers of the Catholic Church, there are many of the opinion, that everything might easily be leaped over and that no establishment could be so strong as to last long." ‡ And he declares him "not to have represented the true Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity; but to have substituted in its room another of your own; against the true Apostolical tradition of that doctrine, and the common interpretation of the Scriptures throughout all the ages of the Church of Christ." The work of Knight,

* "Life of Bull," p. 322.

† "The Scripture Doctrine of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity vindicated from the misinterpretations of Dr. Clarke. To which is prefixed a Letter to the Reverend Doctor. By Robert Nelson, Esq. 1714."

‡ p. xxi.

which Nelson endorsed in this prefatory letter, has been described (by Van Mildert) "as a learned, acute, and well-digested performance, written with candour and good temper, and Dr. Clarke put forth his full strength in answering it." His answer* appeared in the following year, in the form of a letter to Nelson, "whose remarks," he says, "are written with so much candour and civility, with so much fairness and temper, that they may well become an example to clergymen and others of writing controversy in such a manner, as that truth may by weighing arguments on both sides be fully searched after, and our common Christianity suffer nothing in the mean time through want of meekness and charity." Nelson prepared a reply to this letter of Dr. Clarke, which was to have been prefixed to Knight's rejoinder,† and which he was only prevented from completing by his declining health. The advocates of Orthodoxy, however, could not afford to relinquish the advantage of his authority, and his honored name, after his decease, still continued to appear upon the title-page of the contending disputants, as the respected champion of the doctrines of the Church.‡

* "A Reply to the Objections of Robert Nelson, Esq., and of an anonymous author, against Dr. Clarke's Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity. 1714."

† "The True Scripture Doctrine of the Most Holy and Undivided Trinity, continued and vindicated from the misrepresentations of Dr. Clarke. In answer to his Reply. By the author of the 'Scripture Doctrine' published and recommended by Robert Nelson, Esq. 1715."

‡ "Some brief Critical Remarks on Dr. Clarke's last Papers, which are his 'Reply to Mr. Nelson,' and an anonymous writer, and to the author of 'Some Considerations,' &c. By John Edwards, D.D. 1714." The writer says, "he has balked the expectation of his friends and made good Mr. Nelson's observation of him, 'that he hath an artful way of citing authors and books,'"

"A Discourse showing that the Exposition, which the Ante-Nicene Fathers have given of the Text, alleged against the Reverend Dr. Clarke, by a learned layman (Mr. Nelson), are more agreeable to the interpretations of Dr. Clarke than to the interpretations of that learned layman. 1714."

"A Letter to the Rev. Dr. Wells, in answer to his Remarks, &c. By Samuel Clarke, D.D., 1714." The writer retorts upon Nelson, and augurs the

His contentions for the faith, and his labours of charity were now alike drawing to their earthly close. In October, 1714, being now in the 59th year of his age, he found his strength rapidly declining under an attack of asthma and dropsy on the heart, and he was advised by his physicians to have recourse to the purer air of Kensington, then commonly recommended for consumptive and other invalids. He prepared accordingly to release himself from the charitable and religious engagements which had hitherto occupied his time. He begged his friend Sir Marmaduke Wyvill to take his place as Treasurer and Chairman of St. George's Vestry. He sent back to Dr. Wells (Oct. 14,) the MS. of his "Duty of Church Building," with a kindly letter of approval; taking the opportunity to interest his friend in the distribution of Bibles and Common Prayer Books among the Episcopalians of Scotland, and noticing the measures which had been taken, that that good work should not sink by the death of the Queen. He returned to Mr. Theobald (Pope's Antagonist), a translation of Nowell's Catechism, which had been sent to him four months before for his approval. He wrote a farewell letter (Oct. 28,) to his Associates at the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge. While to his friend Lee, he committed the MS. of his "Address to Persons of Quality and Estate," which

ultimate triumph of his doctrines, as follows, "I shall conclude the whole with setting before you, as in a glass, a lively and exact picture of the different spirits of men, in the words of a person as heartily zealous for the authority and traditions of the Church as any learned protestant in Christendom. It is the ingenious Robert Nelson, Esq. in his 'Life of the Right Reverend Bishop Bull,' speaking concerning the Bishop's explication of the doctrine of justification, which is now as universally received and followed as it was then, contrary to the general opinion of divines."

"A Letter to the author of a book entitled 'The True Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity continued and vindicated, recommended first by Mr. Nelson, and since by Dr. Waterland.' By Samuel Clarke, D.D. 1719."

Compare also "Waterland's Works," vol. iii. p. 164., vol. ii. p. 290.

he now foresaw he should not be able himself to complete as he had proposed.

"About the latter end of last autumn," writes Lee, "finding his health to decline apace, and being advised, by his physicians, to retire from the town, for the benefit of the air, immediately before his departure, and after he had been for several hours fatigued with a great deal of company, taking their leave of him; he called to me in the last place, and kindly embracing me in the presence of God, and as the greatest pledge he could give me of his most Christian affection and sincere confidence, delivered to me the manuscript written all with his own hand, (which I keep by me as a most precious depositum) from a copy of which, the following Address, with the reflections thereupon, is here printed: and then requested me to consider the whole well, and after that to do therewith as should appear best."

At Kensington he took up his residence with his cousin, Mrs. Delicia Woolf, daughter of Sir Gabriel Roberts; a lady to whose house he would not have repaired for religious sympathy, she being a staunch Non-conformist, and ultimately giving away her hand and fortune to a young dissenting minister* whom she had entertained as her chaplain; but whose attention to him in this his last illness Nelson thankfully acknowledged in his will, by bequeathing to her the copyright of his "Festivals and Fasts." His illness was but of three months' duration, and of its circumstances we have only the scantiest record. We get a glimpse of him on one occasion riding in the Park in his chariot, in company with his eccentric friend Lee, gazing together with him upon a glorious sun as it burst from behind a cloud, and accepting it for an emblem of the eternal brightness that should shortly break upon him. At the beginning of November he was well enough to complete an "Address to

* Dr. Obadiah Hughes, who thus became possessed of some of Nelson's papers. See Birch's *Life of Tillotson*, pp. 67, 91.

the True Lovers of Devotion," which he prefixed to Lee's "Christian's Exercise."* He called it his "dying address," and we have in it some of his last thoughts upon religion, tinged with the mystical theology with which his friend was so deeply imbued, and which Nelson here pronounces to be "the most perfect essence of the Christian religion, which some have not unfitly called the kingdom of God in the soul." "I must own," he concludes, "I had proposed to myself a larger scheme for this address, but the wise providence of God hath visited me with an illness, which maketh thinking and writing irksome and grievous to me. But I desire entirely to submit to the will of God; and humbly beg your most devout prayers for me upon this occasion, and more particularly for my spiritual improvement under this dispensation, which will lay a particular obligation upon me." This is dated from Kensington, November 3rd, 1714. On the 14th of the month we find Lee addressing a letter † of Christian consolation to him as

"MY DEAR FRIEND AND THE GIFT OF GOD TO ME,—This day, my dear friend, I heard it sounded in the lesson, 'Lord, he whom thou lovest is sick.' Thus, thus prayeth my soul. And, oh! that I could but now hear the voice of our Jesus, sounding also this gracious answer, 'This sickness is not unto death!' Be comforted, be comforted, dear Sir; for as you have been a comforter to many under God, so much comfort remaineth for you, both here and hereafter, when your warfare shall be accomplished; all these will undoubtedly be for the glory of God, what lieth so much at your heart. . . . This I may be certain of, that all this is for your greater purification, and that the Son of God will be glorified by you in it, even as

* "The Christian's Exercise, or Rules to live above the World while we are in it. In Four Parts. By Thomas-à-Kempis. Addressed to all the true lovers of devotion, by Robert Nelson, Esq. To which is added a Prayer which Mr. Nelson made for his own private use. And a letter wrote by Archbishop Tillotson to his sick friend. 1715." 2nd edition. 1717.

† "Notes and Materials for an Adequate Biography of Wm. Law. By C. Walton. 1854." p. 251.

you desire He should be glorified. You are now, therefore, called to make a sacrifice of all to Him, and if at any time you have been pleased with the good you have been an instrument of by grace, or with the applause you may have received for it by men of goodwill, or may unwarily have taken part of the glory to yourself; now you are to cast all at the feet of Jesus, that so alone He may have the glory.

“To whom, dear Sir, I always commit you, with most affectionate sympathy of heart, yours in that friendship and service which hath no end,

“FRANCIS LEE.

“To the best of friends from the most affectionate of friends.”

It is interesting to be thus assured that he who had hastened to the deathbed of his friend Tillotson, and held him in his arms when he expired, and who watched for six months over the decaying strength of Kettlewell, was not himself “left to die alone;” that at least one affectionate friend was there, ready to administer the consolations which those who have been most familiar with themselves, are then most thankful to be assured of by other lips; and that on the pious and charitable Robert Nelson’s end there did not fail to rest the blessing of the Psalmist, “Blessed is he that considereth the poor and needy; the Lord shall deliver him in the time of trouble. The Lord comfort him, when he lieth sick upon his bed; make thou all his bed in his sickness.” “Hence he derived,” says his friend Marshall, “that admirable calm and patience, that firm affiance in the mercies of God through Christ Jesus, that full assurance of hope in his promises, which supported him under the weakness and pressures of a lingering obstinate distemper, and sweetened to him at last the very bitterness of death itself.”*

But Nelson was soon to pass beyond the reach of sick bed trials or comforts. On Dec. 11, it was well known

* Funeral Discourse.

that he was dying.* On the 18th he made his will, which, after kindly remembrances to his relatives, he bequeathed the bulk of his estate to charitable use. "Thus he *ended*, as he had all along *spent*, his days; w the same person still; maintaining the same character, as carrying it with him to the place of refreshment."† He lay at the last several hours speechless, perfectly composed taking no nourishment, and showing no signs of life except that it was just perceptible that he continued to breathe. And on the 16th of January, this good man's soul passed away quietly into peace. "He died, as he had lived, like a lamb, without commotion or struggle, full of confidence in the will of God, and entirely resigned to His holy providence."‡

His remains were removed to his own house in Gloucester Street, § from which they were carried to St. George's Chapel adjacent, where he had so constantly worshipped and were finally interred (as requested in his will) in the new burial-ground belonging to it in Lamb's Conduit Field which was consecrated for the occasion by Dr. Bisse, the Bishop of Hereford, Bishop Compton of London chancellor to be indisposed. His motive for selecting this graveyard for his interment was a desire to overcome the aversion which

* "Kennett's MSS. Collections," vol. xvi. p. 473. "Dec. 11, 1714. It is said that Mr. Nelson at the Gravelpits at Kennington is past all hope of recovery."

† Marshall's Funeral Discourse.

‡ *Ibid.* Amid our natural anxiety to recover some of this good man's dying words, it is disappointing to meet with the solitary particular that, "About four in the afternoon, the day preceding his death, he suddenly put back the curtain, raised his head, and uttered the following sentence: 'There is a very great fire in London this night,' then closed his eyes and lay some hours before."—*Preface to Monck Berkeley's Poems*, p. 448.

§ "Registrum Sepulchrorum in Cæmeterio Sti Georgii Martyris. Anno Domini 1714. Jan. 28. Robert Nelson, Esq., of Gloucester-street, Vir Insignis Parochial tradition points to the house in Gloucester-street immediately adjoining St. George's Church, and now known as No. 44, Queen Square, as the house from which Nelson was buried. He seems to have removed from a larger mansion in Ormond-street after his wife's death.

had been discovered for its use; and his condescension to vulgar prejudice soon had the wished-for effect, and it was then accounted an honour to be buried by his side.* The spot where his venerated form was laid is situate on the left-hand side, immediately within the old entrance from Gray's Inn Road, and is marked by a large square monument,† in the fashion of the time, on the four sides of which is an eulogistic epitaph from the pen of his friend Smallridge. All excess of funereal pomp Nelson had strictly prohibited; nor did his executors (by his desire) give any encouragement to the then usual compliment of a funeral sermon,‡ which his friend Dr. Marshall

* Thus Hearne's "Reliquiæ," p. 865, "Mar. 16, 1735: Dr. Hanbury, who died on the 27th past, and was buried near Mr. Nelson in new burying-ground of St. George's parish, has left £100 to the Nonjuring clergy."

And Nichols' "Lit. Anec.," vol. iii. p. 193. "Mr. Charles Dilly was buried on the 12th May, 1807, in the cemetery of St. George the Martyr, Queen Square, in a grave nearly adjoining that in which the famous Robert Nelson was deposited."

† Twenty years ago, the remains of this monument were doomed to unworthy demolition in the following advertisement:—

ST. GEORGE THE MARTYR, Middlesex.—Whereas several Tombs and Monuments in the Burial Ground of this Parish, situate at the back of the Foundling Hospital, bearing the undermentioned names, are in a state of complete dilapidation, notice is hereby given that unless the representatives of the several families, or those claiming the right to the TOMBS, do put them into decent repair within the space of three calendar months from the date hereof, they will be REMOVED.—Dated this 10th day of May, 1839.

WILLIAM SHORT,	Rector.
FRANCIS WARR,	} Church-
PEREGRINE FERNANDEZ,	

At the head of the list is the name of "Robert Nelson, 1714." The Church of England was saved from the contemplated disgrace by the Vestry of St. George's who (at the suggestion of the churchwardens) were at the expense of restoring the monument precisely to its original state.

‡ "A Sermon preached in the chapel of Ormond-street on Sunday the 6th of February, 1714, upon occasion of the much lamented death of that pious and worthy gentleman, Robert Nelson, Esq. Published at the request of the Trustees of the said chapel, by J. Marshall, LL.D., and morning preacher of the same. Prov. x. 7. The memory of the Just is Blessed. London, 1714."

Extract from Minute Book of St. George's Chapel, Feb. 15, 1714: "The Trustees having taken particular notice of the excellent sermon preached by Dr. Marshall on Sunday the 6th day of February instant, wherein he did in a

nevertheless thought proper to deliver on the following Sunday.

"I enter upon the province," writes Marshall, "unasked and uninvited. The modesty of our departed friend, which cast a distinguished lustre upon numberless other virtues, carried him to his grave in privacy and silence; nor were the persons intrusted with the care of his obsequies at liberty to adorn them with proper honours. They have performed the part incumbent on them, and have consigned his mortal remains to the place whereunto he bequeathed them, and in the manner which he had requested of them.

"Yet I may well presume, that even his modesty itself would here give way, upon the suggestion that any good would probably be done by the blazoning his virtues, since this was a motive which he never could withstand; it was equally the business and pleasure of his life, and is therefore the fitter to attend him at his death. . . .

"I can have no end to serve by flattering his memory; nor do I fear the imputation of it, in a case where all the difficulty will be to say enough. For in the duties of godliness, how assiduous he was and fervent, how uniform and constant, how serious and unaffected, you are all my witnesses; and will join with me in this testimony of him, that we know not where either our religion or our place of worship hath a brighter ornament left to either.

"His constant attendance at the eucharistical sacrifice, his exemplary and reverend behaviour there, was so very edifying and conspicuous, as helped to warm many cold and lukewarm hearts, and to inflame them with a like spirit of true and fervent piety.

"Religion seemed, indeed, and doubtless was, the care of his life; it grew, it flourished observably, under the happy influence of his pious endeavours, and his engaging practice.

very pathetic manner recommend the example of Mr. Nelson, lately deceased, to be imitated by the audience, and the Trustees being desirous as well to have so useful a discourse made public, as to do all the honor they can to Mr. Nelson's memory, do therefore desire Dr. Marshall that he will be pleased to print the said sermon."

“ His learning, large as it was and various, was set apart for the service of the altar, and sanctified to religious uses. And many a pious soul breathes daily to God its holy aspirations of prayer and praise, in the language of his heart and tongue. . . .

“ He was zealous for his God, and for the honour of His service ; and therefore only preferred, above others, the Church of England, because here he thought that honour best consulted. He understood, by due inquiry, that she was the most conformable, both in doctrine and government, to the model once and first ‘delivered to the saints.’ For neither his faith nor his practice proceeded upon trust, but upon a reasonable choice. He had, as much as any, proved, examined, considered all things ; was able to satisfy himself, and to give a reason to others, of the hope which was in him ; and where once he fixed, he fixed upon so good a foundation, that he was not easily removed from it by any wind of doctrine ; but having rightly apprehended, he ever held fast that which was good. . . .

“ Either nature or grace had blessed him with such a flowing courtesy of mind and manners, that few provocations could break in upon or disconcert it. Zealous as he was (and surely no man was more, or more truly so) for the honour of his God, he was never thence transported to any undue excursions against man.

“ No man conversed more generally than he with all persuasions, and no man more inoffensively, nor therefore with more likelihood of recommending to all men the doctrine of his God and Saviour. Whenever the assaults of heresy obliged him to appear in defence of the faith, and to contend for the truth as it is in Jesus, as personal respects were beside the question, he candidly threw them out of it.

“ A rare example this, to our angry writers upon disputed subjects ; who think it not enough to confute an adversary without confounding him ; and have not learned from his Christian practice the happy secret of distinguishing between the person and the error. . . .

“ But, above all, his works of mercy, his labours of love, these were his darling, his best-beloved employments. The poor, the fatherless, and the widow, will never enough

lament his irreparable loss. The societies which have been lately formed for various purposes of piety and charity will miss in him a faithful counsellor, a prudent director, an able manager, and every way accomplished for the glorious and godlike work of doing good.

"Many expences in life, which feed the vices and vanities of others, he prudently cut off as superfluous, that he might have the more to give to such as needed.

"His frugality was no cover to avaricious purposes, but all his œconomy was designed to make room for charity which he did not so much reserve for bequests at his death as like a wife and a good steward he was a liberal dispenser of it in his life. Pompous he would be in neither, that in both he might be more useful. . . .

"No man ever advanced the character of a private gentleman to a more elevated pitch than he; in him the gentleman and the Christian were so happily united, he did so adorn religion, and was so adorned by it, that the rising generation may hence with great advantage observe, how perfectly consistent these characters are, and how much they may both be depreciated by a neglect of their common duties. . . .

"And now that we are going to offer up to God the great and solemn sacrifice of thanksgiving, we may not improperly mix with it our peculiar praises to His holy name, for all the glories of His grace which so eminently shone forth in this His faithful servant.

"Exemplary virtues had this encouragement in the primitive Church, that the names of such as were eminent for the practice of them, were remembered with honour in her most solemn offices.

"In our most solemn offices, the devotions of many are doubtless here and elsewhere assisted by the pious labours of our departed friend. So that when we are praising God for all his servants departed this life in his faith and fear, this eminent servant of God may well deserve from us a more special commemoration. *

* An office of Commemoration on the anniversary of Robert Nelson's decease has been found among the papers of his friend Francis Lee, and is printed by Mr. C. Walton in his interesting and valuable "Notes and Materials for an adequate Biography of William Law," pp. 248, et seqq. n

“At the same time let us beseech the Father of Mercies that He would give us His grace so to follow both this, and every other good example, that we may all at length have an happy meeting in that other and better world, where with angels and archangels, with this our deceased friend and brother, with the general assembly of God’s elect, and all the spirits of just men made perfect, we may laud and magnify His glorious name, evermore praising Him, and saying, Holy, holy, holy Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

“To whom be glory and dominion, both now and for evermore. Amen.”

It commences as follows :—“A Commemoration. Jan. 16. R. N., of blessed memory, my familiar Friend and Brother. The Righteous shall be had in everlasting remembrance. Psalms 41, 42, 112, 116. Lessons, Wisdom iv, 10, to ver. 17. St. John v. 29, 30.” Its general tone will be indicated by the following prayer: “Lord, lift thou up the light of thy countenance upon all faithful souls, and more particularly upon all who have been confessors among us for truth and righteousness, especially this our dear brother, thy servant, and the delight of my soul, and let the cry both of him and of all the other souls lying under the heavenly altar, with the seal of faith, together with the prayers of all the dead Israelites, from the faithful Abraham down to this day, come up before thee and be accepted; that thy long expected kingdom may come speedily, and that thy glory may dwell upon the earth.”



APPENDIX.



No. I.

THE Will of Robert Nelson ; extracted from the Registry of the Prerogative Court of Canterbury .*

“ In the name of God, Amen. I, ROBERT NELSON, of the parish of St. Andrew’s, Holborn, in the county of Middlesex, Esq., being infirm in body, but of sound mind and understanding, doe make this my last will and testament, in manner and form following : I recommend my soul, that precious and immortal part of me, into the most merciful hands of God, hoping for the pardon of all my many and great sins, and for the inconceivable blessing of eternal life, through the merits of my blessed Saviour, and only Redeemer, Jesus Christ, who out of His abundant love to mankind came into the world to save sinners ; and grant, O Lord, that whatever defylements it may have contracted in the midst of this miserable and naughty world, through the lusts of the flesh, or the wiles of Satan, being purged and done away by the blood of that immaculate Lamb, that was slain to take away the sins of the world, it may be presented pure and without spot before Thee at the last day, when all the world shall be sumon’d before the great tribunal ; and the Lord have mercy upon me in that day. I desire my body may beprivately interr’d of in the cemetery of St. George the

* This will was printed by Curll, immediately after Robert Nelson’s decease.

Mary, being now part of the said parish of St. Andrew's, Holborn; but if that shall not be consecrated at the time of my death, then my will is that my body may be buried in the church-yard of the parish of Cranford, in the said County of Middlesex, at the east end of the church, in a most comfortable hope of a happy resurrection, life, and immortality, being brought to light through the Gospel. And as touching the disposition of such temporal estate as God in His great mercy has blessed me with, I give and dispose thereof as followeth, vizt: I desire that all my just debts and funeral expences shall be first paid and satisfied. And then I give and bequeath the following summes to charitable uses, as an humble acknowledgment of God's great bounty to me through the whole course of my life. I give and bequeath to the Reverend Dean Hicks, now living in Ormond Street, in the said county of Middlesex, and to the Reverend Mr. Nathaniel Spinks, the summe of two hundred pounds, upon trust that they distribute the same among such necessitous clergymen as they shall think the most proper objects of such charity. I give and bequeath to the Corporation Society for Propagating the Gospel in Foreign Parts one hundred pounds. I give and bequeath to Mr. Henry Hoare, of London, goldsmith, one of my executors hereinafter named, two hundred pounds, upon trust to distribute one hundred pounds, part thereof, in such manner as shall be directed by the Society for Promoting Christian Knowledge, of which I have been many years an unworthy member, and the other one hundred pounds to be employed by him in promoting parochial libraryes. I give and bequeath to Sion College, in the city of London, twenty pounds, to be laid out in such books as the president and the deans of the college for the time being shall direct. I give and bequeath to the said Mr. Henry Hoare, and to

Mr. Benjamin Wyche, five hundred pounds in trust, nevertheless for the sole use and benefit of Miss Mary Lucy, only daughter of Sir Berkeley Lucy, Barronet, to be paid to her at her day of marriage, or age of one-and-twenty years, which shall first happen. And my will and pleasure is, that the said Henry Hoare and Benjamin Wyche put out the same upon some mortgage, or other good parliamentary security, and that the profit or interest arising therefrom be received and kept by them for the sole use and benefit of the said Mary Lucy, but not to be paid to her till the day of her marriage, or her age of one-and-twenty years, which shall first happen; and in case the said Mary Lucy shall die before she is married,* or shall attain the age of one-and-twenty years, then my will and pleasure is, that the said sum of five hundred pounds, and the interest thereof arising, be paid by the said Henry Hoare and Benjamin Wyche to the said Sir Berkeley Lucy, Barronet, to whom I give and bequeath the said five hundred pounds, and all the interest and profits that shall arise therefrom. And my will and meaning is, that the said Henry Hoare and Benjamin Wyche shall not be answerable for any sum, or sums of money, to be placed out at interest by them upon the trusts aforesaid, with the consent of the parties concerned. I give and bequeath to my most valuable friend, as well as dear relation, my uncle Sir Gabriel Roberts, two hundred pounds; I give and bequeath to my dear cousin, Mrs. Delitæ Woolfe, three hundred pounds; and in case my uncle, Sir Gabriel Roberts, shall dye before me, then my will and pleasure is, that the legacy of two hundred pounds which I have left him be paid to my said cousin, Mrs. Delitæ Woolfe, his daughter. And I doe moreover bequeath to my said cousin, Delitæ Woolfe, the pictures

* She was married to Hon. C. Compton, youngest son of George, 4th Earl of Northampton.

of my father and mother, and the picture of her father, and of my own, drawn by Sir Godfrey Kneller. And also I give to my said cousin Delitæ Woolfe, the pearl necklace which was formerly my mother's. And I likewise give and bequeath unto my said cousin, Delitæ Woolfe, all my interest which I now, or shall hereafter have in the agreement I have made with Mr. Churchill, in relating to his printing a book entitled "The Feasts and Fasts," with buffs in folio, which is upon condition that the said Mr. Churchill be at all the expences, and that I am to have one-half part of the clear profits, which, by estimation, will, as it is thought, amount to five hundred pounds. I give and bequeath unto my said worthy friend Sir Berkeley Lucy and his lady one hundred pounds for mourning. And I also give and bequeath to the said Lady Lucy the cross set with diamonds which my wife usually wore. I give and bequeath unto Sir William Ingoldby and his Lady Ingoldby her mother's pictures, in little in a case.* I give and bequeath unto Mrs. Elizabeth Ingoldby two hundred pounds, and also my gold pick-tooth case. I give and bequeath to George Hanger, Esq., at Smyrna, the sum of four hundred pounds. I give and bequeath unto Mr. Nicholas Bigsby, linen draper in Fleet Street, London,† one hundred pounds. I give and bequeath to Mr. Augustine Armstrong one hundred pounds, which I desire him to keep for and give to his daughter. Item; I give and bequeath to my worthy friend, the said Dean Hicks, seventy pounds. I give and bequeath to the said Mr. Nathaniel Spinks one hundred pounds. I give and bequeath to Theophilus

* Sir Wm. Ingoldby had married Miss Theophila Lucy, Nelson's step-daughter.

† Apparently a relation of Nelson by his father's side. Mr. John Nelson in his will, bequeaths to two of his sister's children, "John and Nelson Bigsbee, £400 a-piece, with which I would have them well brought up, and placed prentices with some good Turkie merchants."

Lucy, Esq., the diamond ring I usually wear, and my silver shaving basin and wash-ball case, and little silver pott for hott water, which belongs to it. 'And whereas I have, in the custody of Mrs. Jane Kettlewell, a chalice, patin, and plate, all silver, for the use of the Holy Communion, now I do hereby give and bequeath the said chalice, patin, and plate to the minister and churchwardens for the time being of the parish of Dryfield, in the county of Gloucester, for the use of the parish church aforesaid.* I give and bequeath to my worthy friend, the said Mrs. Jane Kettlewell, her husband's picture and five guineas for a legacy. I give and bequeath to the Right Reverend the Lord Bishop of Bristol,† lord almoner, the Madonna of Corregio, with the frame belonging to it, and which hangs on one side the chimney in my dining-room, as a small testimony of that great value and respect I bear to his lordship. I give and bequeath to Mrs. Fowler, daughter of James Chadwick, deceased, the two pictures given to me by her grandmother, Mrs. Tillotson, the one of her mother, Mrs. Chadwick, and the other of her aunt, Mrs. Elizabeth Tillotson, with the two black frames thereunto appertaining. I give and bequeath my books and pictures not otherwise disposed off, to the said Sir Berkeley Lucy, Barronet. I give and bequeath to Mr. David Humphryes,‡ St. Chrysostome's Works in eleven volumes, and Poole's "Synopsis," in five volumes. I give and bequeath to the Reverend Dr. Lupton, all the volumes of Rymer's "Fœdera," and also the following pictures and frames, viz.—that of Dr. Hicks, that of Father Paul, that of Rubens, that of Vandike, that of Petrarcha, and that of Gallileo, which are six heads, in my study. I give and bequeath to Mrs. Jane Bonnell, a silver cupp and cover, with Indian flowers, given me by

* See p. 6.

† Dr. Smallridge.

‡ See p. 242, n.

my wife's father, the Earl of Berkeley. I give and bequeath to Mrs. Jane Hoare, wife of the said Mr. Henry Hoare, two pair of little silver candlesticks for her closet. I give and bequeath to Edward Jennings, Esq., the silver candlestick with two branches. I give and bequeath fifty pounds for the use and benefit of the charity-schools of St. George the Martyr aforesaid, to be paid to the treasurer of the said schools. I give and bequeath unto my good friend Mr. John Skeate, ten pounds to buy a ring in remembrance of me; I give and bequeath fifty pounds to Dr. Francis Lea, to be paid out of the surplus of my estate, if any shall be. And whereas I have several books printed with my name as being the author thereof, viz., "The Companion for the Feasts and Fasts," "The Great Duty of Frequenting the Christian Sacrifice," &c., "The Life of Bishop Bull," &c., in which copies I have the sole right and property; and whereas I have a book printed without my name, called "The Practice of True Devotion in relation to the end, as well as meanes of religion," in which book I have also the sole property, as appears by articles of agreement with booksellers which have printed any impressions of the before-mentioned books; and I doe hereby declare my will and pleasure to be, that the before-mentioned copies shall be disposed of by my executors hereinafter-named to some eminent booksellers or dealers who use the trade of selling books, provided always that the said copies be sold or disposed of to such persons as have already printed them, if they shall severally give what shall be judged a reasonable and fair price for the same. I give and bequeath to all my servants as shall be living with me at the time of my decease, one year's wages, according to their several salaries or wages over, and besides what shall be severally due to them at the time of my decease. I give and bequeath to my servant Richard James, all my wearing

apparel, both linnen and woollen, of what nature or kind soever, at the time of my decease. I give and bequeath to John Sidgley, my coachman, my chariot, and horses belonging to it. I give and bequeath unto my loving friends, Sir George Hanger, of Dryfield, in the county of Gloucester, knight, and the said Mr. Henry Hoare, and to each of them, the sume of one hundred pounds. I also give and devise unto the said Henry Hoare, my picture, being the Madonna of Andrea del Sarto, which hangs in my parlor, with the frame that belongs to it. All the rest and residue of my estate, of what nature or kind soever, I give and devise the same, and every part thereof, unto the said Sir George Hanger and Mr. Henry Hoare, whom I make full and sole executors of this my last will and testament, upon special trust and confidence, that after my just debts, funeral expences, and the other legacies hereinbefore by me given and bequeathed, shall be fully paid and satisfied, they, my said executors, shall apply and dispose of the same, and every part thereof, to such charitable uses and purposes as they, the said Sir George Hanger and Henry Hoare, or the survivor of them, or the executors or administrators of such survivor, shall think most needful and proper. And I doe hereby revoke all former wills by me heretofore made, and declare this to be my only last will and testament. In witness whereof I, the said Robert Nelson, have hereunto set my hand and seal this eighteenth day of December, in the year of our Lord one thousand seven hundred and fourteen.

“ROB. NELSON.”

“Signed, sealed, published, and declared by the said Robert Nelson to be his last will and testament, which is contained in three sheets of paper, in the presence of us

who have subscribed our names as witnesses, in the presence, and at the request, of the said testator,

"C. SILL,

"NATH. PARSLEY,

"RANDOLPH GREENWAY."

"To Sir George Hanger, knight, and Mr. Henry Hoare, Executors of my last will and testament.

"I desire that out of the surplussage of my estate, that you will pay to the Rev. Mr. Dean Hicks twenty pounds per annum during his natural life, and also that you will apply the sum of thirty pounds, or thereabout, in placing out Mary Applewhite* in some advantageous way for her to get her livelihood. As witness my hand this 1st day of January, 1714.

"ROB. NELSON."

"I doe also farther desire that you give to my good friend, Mrs. Jane Bonnell, the salver with Indian figures that belongs to the cup and cover I have given her by my will, and also to give her four silver spoons, and four silver forks, and four silver knives, of them I have by me. And I also desire you will give to the Reverend Dr. Marshall ten guineas, in regard of his constant attendance at the Eucharistical Sacrifice; and that you will also give to the Reverend Mr. Burscough† five guineas. And I also desire that the Reverend Mr. Spinks may be discharged from all interest that shall be due from him without his paying for the same; and, if there is occasion, I desire that what is writt on this side of this paper may be annexed as a codici

* Daughter apparently of the Aunt Applewhite mentioned p. 21, his father's sister.

† Lecturer at St. George's Chapel, Ormond-street.

to my last will and testament. As witness my hand this
2 day of January, 1714.

“ROB. NELSON.”

“January the 25, 1714-15.

“Appeared personally, John Skeat, of the St. Botolph, Aldgate, London, armourer-brazier, and John Nottingham, of the parish of St. Dunstan West, London, and by virtue of their corporal oaths, severally deposed as followeth, viz., That they knew and were well acquainted with the character and manner of writing of Robert Nelson, Esq., deceased, having often seen him write ; and having carefully viewed the name Robert Nelson subscribed to the paper or codicil hereunto annexed, beginning thus, ‘To Sir George Hanger, Knight,’ &c., and ending thus, ‘As witness my hand this 2 day of January, 1714,’ do verily believe, that the name ‘Robert Nelson’ subscribed or written in two several places thereof, is written with the proper handwriting of the said Robert Nelson.

“JOHN SKEAT,

“JOHN NOTTINGHAM.”

“Die prædict. dicti Johannes Skeat et Johannes Nottingham jurati fuere de veritate præmissorum coram me.

“HUM. HENCHMAN, Surr.

“Probatum fuit hujusmodi testamentum apud London (cum duodus codicillis annexis) coram ven^u et egregio viro Johanne Bettessworth, legum doctore curiæ Prærogativæ Cantuar. magistro custode sive commissario legitime constituto 2d February, 1714, juramentis domini Georgii Hanger, militis, et Henrici Hoare, armigeri, executorum in dicto testamento nominatorum, quibus commissâ fuit

administratio omnium et singulorum bonorum, jurium, creditorum dicti defuncti, de bene et fideliter administrand eadem ad Sancta D^mi Evangelia jurat. &c.

" CHARLES DYNELEY, JOHN IGGULDEN, W. F. GOSTLING,	}	Deputy Remembrancers
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No. II.

A complete list of Robert Nelson's writings.

1. Transubstantiation contrary to Scripture; or, the Protestant's Answer to the Seeker's Request. 1681. Anon.
2. The Practice of True Devotion, in relation to the end as well as the means of Religion; with an Office for the Holy Communion. 1698. Anon.
3. An earnest exhortation to Housekeepers to set up the worship of God in their Families. With daily Prayers for Morning and Evening. The second edition. 1702. Anon.
4. A Companion for the Festivals and Fasts of the Church of England, with Collects and Prayers for each solemnity. 1704.
5. The Whole Duty of a Christian, by way of Question and Answer, exactly pursuant to the method of "The Whole Duty of Man," and designed for the use of the Charity Schools in and about London. 1704. Anon.

6. The Necessity of Church Communion vindicated from the scandalous aspersions of a late Pamphlett, entitled, "The Principles of the Protestant Reformation explained, in a Letter of Resolution, concerning Church Communion." Humbly offered to the consideration of the Right Reverend and the Reverend Clergy assembled in Convocation. 1705. Anon.

7. A Letter to an English Priest of the Roman Communion at Rome. 1705.

8. The Great Duty of frequenting the Christian Sacrifice, and the Nature of the Preparation required, with suitable Devotions, partly collected from the Ancient Liturgies. 1706.

9. Instructions for them that come to be Confirmed, by way of Question and Answer. 1706 (perhaps earlier).

10. The Life of Dr. George Bull, late Lord Bishop of St. David's, with the History of those Controversies in which he was engaged; and an Abstract of those Fundamental Doctrines which he maintained and defended in the Latin tongue. By Robert Nelson, Esq. 1712.

11. An Address to Persons of Quality and Estate: by Robert Nelson, Esq. To which is added an Appendix of some original and valuable Papers. 1715.

The following prefaces were also written by him:—

A Preface, wherein the Author's Character is attempted; prefixed to Kettlewell's "Five Discourses." 1695.

An Advertisement to the Reader, prefixed to Kettlewell's "Office for Prisoners." 1696.

A Preface prefixed to Kettlewell's "Letter to a Friend on the Great Evil and Danger of Profuseness." 1704.

A Prefatory notice, prefixed to the third edition of Kettlewell's "Practical Believer." 1712.

A Letter to the Reverend Dr. Clarke, Rector of St. James's, Westminster, prefixed to Knight's "Scripture Doctrine of the Trinity." 1714.

An Address to the True Lovers of Devotion, prefixed to "The Christian's Exercise." 1715.

No. III.

"A prayer which Mr. Nelson made for his own private use," printed in the Appendix to the "Christian's Exercise."

"Grant, O God, that I may not live at random, without any aim or design at all; but that I may propose such ends as are important and material, and proportion my care to the weight of things; that since Thou hast endowed me with an immortal soul, I may apply my most serious thoughts to work out my salvation with fear and trembling.

"Make me sensible, O thou Chiefest Good, of the small moment of any interest that relates purely to this world, by reason of the shortness and uncertainty of my abode here upon earth; our life is but a shadow, and no man can lengthen out his days beyond that natural term, which is set him by his constitution; but how far and how many ways he may fall short of that compass, depends upon so many hidden causes, and so many little accidents, that it may be reckoned among the greatest of uncertainties.

“Grant, therefore, that this consideration may depreciate and vilify all the entertainments of this animal life, and may call off my care from the objects of secular happiness; that since I walk in a vain shadow, I may not disquiet myself also in vain, nor be greedy in heaping up riches, since I cannot tell who shall gather them; that I may not trouble myself by aiming at greatness, since the scene of life will be quickly past, and the actors must all retire into a state of equality; that I may not be earnest in the pursuit of fame, since I must shortly die, and those that most admire me; that I may not drudge too laboriously in the prosecution of learning, since death makes no difference, and we know not of what importance it may be to the happiness of another life; that I may use this world as not abusing it, since the fashion of it passes away.

“Grant that I may employ my faculties in that work Thou hast assigned them, that I may fight the good fight, and destroy the whole body of sin; that I may mortify my passions, and purify my affections; acquire virtuous and holy dispositions, obtain heaven and avoid hell. Let this be my great concern, and let my principal care and diligence be employed about it.

“Make me sensible, O God, of the vast and infinite moment of it; no less than eternal happiness, or eternal misery depends upon it. Let me often consider how bitter it will be, to be for ever excluded from the beatific presence of God, and to be full of desire and full of despair, without other relief than lamenting my folly and misery to eternal ages; and who is able to dwell with the everlasting burnings?

“Teach me to remember, that more than ordinary care is necessary to secure eternal happiness; and though we are instated into a capacity of pardon and reconciliation by the death of Christ, 'tis not our immediate and actual discharge from sin, makes me careful to perform the conditions he

requires, the neglect of which will make my condemnation more intolerable. Let me remember that strait is the gate, and narrow is the way, that leadeth to life ; and that flesh and blood cannot inherit the kingdom of God.

“ Let me always be upon my guard against those potent and malicious enemies that are confederates against me. Make me sober and vigilant, because our adversary, the devil, walks about as a roaring lyon, seeking whom he may devour.

“ Let me be mindful that I have but a little time for this great work, which is very precarious and uncertain ; make me therefore extreamly concerned to improve this short, this uncertain opportunity, this only time of probation, to work with all my might, while 'tis day, before the night comes, when no man can work.

“ Deliver me, most gracious God, from the folly of neglecting this grand concern, of being more intent upon this world than the next ; but that I may wisely and prudently withdraw myself, as much as possible, from the noise, hurry, and business of this world, and apply myself more intirely to a life of devotion and religion ; to lay aside every weight, that I may be furer to win the great prize, and so to run as to obtain : grant this for the merits of thy dear Son Jesus, my only mediator and advocate.— Amen, Amen, Amen.”

No. IV.

Epitaph on Robert Nelson's tomb, written by Bishop Smallridge :—

H. S. E.

ROBERTUS NELSON, *Armiger*,

Qui,

Patre ortus *Johanne* Cive Londinensi,

Ex Societate Mercatorum cum Turcis commercium

Habentium,

Matre *Deliciis* Sorore *Gabrielis Roberts* Equitis aurati,

Ex eadem civitate & eodem Sodalitio,

Uxorem habuit Honoratissimam Dominam

Theophilam Lucy,^{*}

*Kingsmanni** *Lucy* Baronnetti viduam,

Prænobilis *Johannis*† Comitis de BERKELEY filiam,

Quam Aquisgranum usque valetudinis recuperandæ causa

Proficiscentem

Lubenter comitatus,

Ad extremum vitæ terminum summo amore fovit,

Morte divulsam

Per novem annos superstes plurimum desideravit.

Literis Græcis & Latinis,

Quas partim in Schola Paulina,

Partim intra domesticos parietes didicerat,

Linguarum Gallicæ & Italicæ peritiam

Lutetiæ & Romæ agens faciliè adjunxit.

* An error for Kingsmilli.

† An error for Georgii.

In omni ferè Literarum genere versatus,
 Ad Theologiæ studium animum præcipuè appulit.
 Et felici pariter memoriâ atque acri judicio pollens,
 Antiquitatum Ecclesiasticarum scientiâ
 Inter Clericos enituit Laicus.
 Peragratâ semel atque iterum Europâ,
 Postquam diversas Civitatum
 Et Religionum formas exploraverat,
 Nullam Reipublicæ administrandæ rationem
 Monarchiæ domi constitutæ præposuit,
 Cæteras omnes Ecclesias Anglicanæ longe posthabuit,
 Hanc ipsi semper caram
 Beneficiis auxit,
 Vitâ exornavit,
 Scriptis defendit ;
 Filius ipsius obsequentissimus,
 Et propugnator imprimis strenuus.
 Nulla erat bonorum Virorum communitas,
 Aut ad pauperum liberos sumptu Locupletiorum
 Bene instruendos,
 Aut ad augendam utilitatem publicam,
 Aut ad promovendam Dei gloriam instituta,
 Cui non se libenter socium addidit.

 Hisce studiis & temporis & opum
 Partem longé maximam impendit.
 Quicquid Facultatum supererat,
 Id ferè omne supremis tabulis
 In eosdem usus legavit.
 Dum id sibi negotii unicè dedit, Deo ut placeret,
 Severam interim Christianæ Religionis,
 Ad quam se composuit, disciplinam
 Suavissima morum facilitate ita temperavit,
 Ut hominibus perraro displiceret :
 In illo enim, si in alio quopiam mortalium,

Forma ipsa Honesti mirè elucebat,
Et amorem omnium facilè excitabat.
Cum Naturæ satis & Gloriæ,
Bonis omnibus & Ecclesiæ
Parum diu vixisset,
Fatali Asthmate correptus
Kensingtoniæ animam Deo reddidit,
Vitæ jam actæ recordatione lætus,
Et futuræ spei plenus.
Dum Christianum Sacrificium rite celebrabitur,
Apud Sanctæ Cœnæ participes,
NELSONI vigebit memoria.
Dum solennia recurrent Festa & Jejunia,
NELSONI Fastos jugiter revolvant Pii :
Illum habebunt inter Hymnos & Preces,
Illum inter sacra gaudia & suspiria
Comitem pariter & adiutorem.
Vivit adhuc, & in omne ævum vivet,
Vir pius, simplex, candidus, urbanus :
Adhuc in Scriptis post mortem editis,
Et nunquam morituris,
Cum nobilibus & locupletibus miscet colloquia ;
Adhuc eos sermonibus
Multa pietate & eruditione refertis
Delectare pergit & instruere.
Ob. 16. Jan. Ao. Dom. 1714.
Ætat. suæ 59.

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